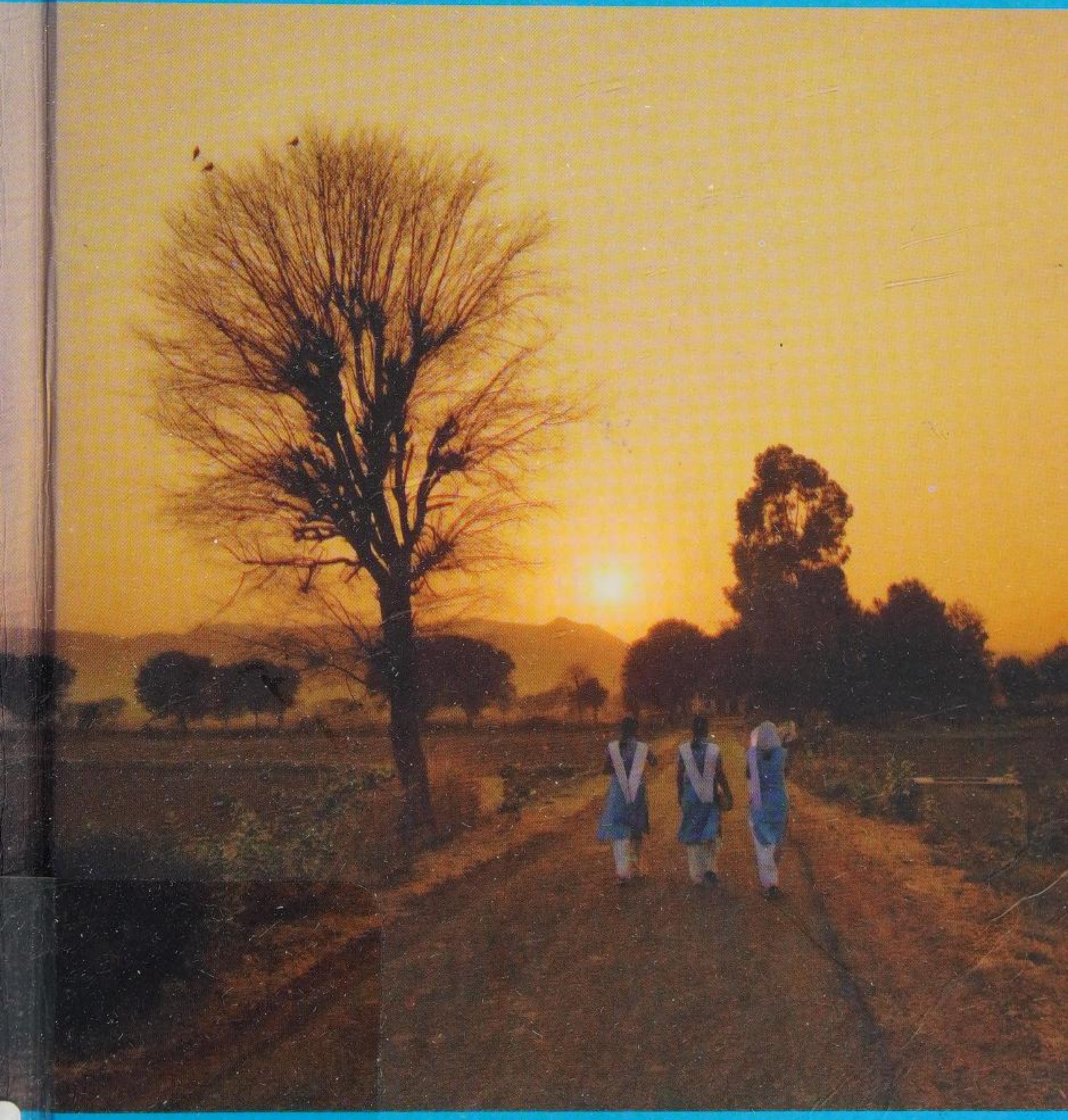
Modernization and Dalit Education

Ambedkar's Vision



K.S. CHALAM

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Modernization and Dalit Education

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Foreword

I have long admired Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as a polymath, who made distinctive contributions in such diverse fields as sociology, law, philosophy, religion, economics and politics. His seminal contribution to our constitution as its social conscience is beyond disputation in that he provided the formidable footing for uplift of not only scheduled castes and scheduled tribes but also the other backward castes. I have also been influenced by his exegesis on "Buddha Dhamma" through which he restored the pristine positivistic glory of the Buddha's philosophy by piercing through the mystic veils of various Buddhist denominations.

In spite of such exposure to Dr. Ambedkar's work, I knew nothing of his views about education. I am delighted to note that Prof. K.S. Chalam has shed light on the aspect through this book. It has been pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar used education as a modernist project in his mission. Like Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phooley, he assailed the British for their failure to provide educational opportunities for the poor and dalits. He, therefore,

approached the British Indian Government with a proposal to extend educational facilities to dalits on the same line as Muslims. It is not widely known that Muslims had been provided with reservations even before dalits.

The author has rightly pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar spent a major part of his life as a student, teacher and scholar in the process of which he became the pioneer of a subject called "Economics of Education". His world-view was shaped by liberal and progressive traditions of modern west, more particularly of England and America. In the USA, he was particularly influenced by John Dewey, who was not only a great philosopher but also an equally great educationist. When he applied it to the specific social and historical conditions of our country through the scheme of reservations, his intellectual originality came into coruscating play.

The author has done well by covering Dr. Ambedkar's views on economic development. Being a modernist like Nehru, he set huge sore by industrialization. Like Nehru again, he laid great emphasis on public sector, which, apart from triggering industrial growth, would provide employment opportunities to the depressed classes. Nehru and Ambedkar were on the same wavelength as their European contemporaries like Lord Attlee and other social democrats. A capitalist thinker like Prof. Jagdish Bhagawat has conceded that it was a correct approach at that time for an emerging nation like India, which was bracing itself up for industrialization without a developed private sector. At a later stage, we have come to introduce pro-market reforms, as the role of state had been overextended to the point of causing both ineptitude and turpitude. Even while private sector grows, we cannot be oblivious to the obligation of promoting job avenues for weaker sections.

The last chapter on democracy and development shows how Dr. Ambedkar anticipated positions adopted by Prof. Amartya Sen

in his book *Development as Freedom*. The book ended on Dr. Ambedkar's positive note that development, justice and freedom can be achieved only through parliamentary democracy. Although Ambedkar appears like an ultimate iconoclast to upper castes and upwardly mobile classes in India, it needs to be emphasized that he belongs to the mainstream democratic thought. This ideological paradox should not cause a surprise, as the classic philosophy of modern liberalism is much too radical for the comfort of the people, whose specialized skills have fired welcome personal aspirations but not spawned larger social values. Like every pioneering heretic, Ambedkar will eventually be embraced by his critics. We will have to await the unfolding of this process, which is bound to occur sooner than later.

I am glad of the opportunity to write this foreword to the book by Prof. K.S. Chalam, who combines social commitment with academic rigour. The book is a fine addition to the burgeoning literature on Dr. Ambedkar.

New Delhi
20 April, 2008

S. Jaipal Reddy
Union Minister of Urban Development
Government of India

Preface

I have been studying Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's writings and speeches for the last two decades. The intensity of scholarship on Ambedkar today is found to be more profane and profound than ever before. It is not only because of the availability of his writings in print but also due to dispassionate analysis of his writings as a scholar and statesman by some European and American researchers. I also had the opportunity as a teacher and scholar to discuss about his writings at various seminars and conferences. However, I took special interest in studying his writings in the area of education and development—the two issues on which there is relatively inadequate attention.

I have selected the following source material from my earlier writings for the present book: Chapter 2 is drawn from "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as an Educationist", a lecture delivered at Andhra University in 1989 and published in A.U. Law College magazine of 1992–93; Chapter 3 "A People's Movement for Universalization of Education" is the foundation day lecture delivered at Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar Central University on 10 January, 2006 at

Lucknow; Chapter 4 "Economics of Dalit Education" is a paper presented at UGC National Seminar on "Dr. Ambedkar's Economic Philosophy", held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, 17–18 July, 1992; Chapter 5 "Educational Policy of East India Company and Modernization" is Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture delivered on 14 April, 2006 at the University of Hyderabad; Chapter 6, "Higher Education for Dalits after Globalization" is the chief guest's address delivered at National Seminar on Higher Education held at Milind College, Aurangabad, 16–17 September, 2004; Chapter 7 "Education for Social Empowerment" is the inaugural address delivered at the National Conference held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, 5–6 July, 2007; Chapter 8 "Equity versus Quality Syndrome in Higher Education", published in *University News*, special number, December 2006; Chapter 9 " Perceptions of Dalit Development" is also an inaugural address delivered at National Seminar on Dr. Ambedkar's Vision of Dalit Uplift and Its Contemporary Relevance, held at Kakatiya University, Warangal, on 6 May, 2006; Chapter 10 "Relevance of Public Sector for Modernization" is ONGC endowment lecture delivered at Madras University, Chennai, on 7 May, 2007; and Chapter 11 "Democracy and Development in India" is also a lecture delivered at DNR College, Bhimavaram, on 6 December,1997 and later published in a souvenir in Hyderabad. I have revised some of the above material and added a few paragraphs to present it in a book form.

Shri S. Jaipal Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Urban Development, Government of India was gracious in writing a wonderful foreword to the book. I am grateful to him for the kind gesture.

I have been discussing these issues with friends like for Prof. B.L. Mungekar, Prof. S.K. Thorat, Dr. Prakash Louis, Prof. Thangaraj, Prof. Simon Charsley, Sri Rajasekhar Vundru and several others in the profession. I am grateful to the authorities of the universities and the officers who have sponsored my lectures. Mr. Pranit Rawat, the publisher, has been instrumental in making

me to bring out this material in a book form. Mr. Vinay Kumar has typed the manuscript for publication. I am grateful to all of them.

The views expressed in the book are personal and do not reflect the organization (UPSC) in which I am now working.

K.S. Chalam

One

Introduction

The modernist project in India, according to some scholars, originated in the East India Company's policy of education. There were in fact three modernist projects in operation (see Chapter 5). Out of which, none appears to have concentrated on the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). There are, however, certain externalities of these projects, which have helped to produce great personalities like B.R. Ambedkar, Rao Bahadur Srinivasan, Meghanand Saha and others.[1] The discussion on modernity in India, however, revolves round a few personalities, incidents, etc., that have helped to bring industrialization, mass production, mass communication and other gifts of western civilization to India through colonialism. Some thinkers have even attributed urbanization, democratic values, rationalism and secularism to colonial era without considering that the Indus Valley Civilization, Buddhist Sangha structure, Charvaka and Lokayata philosophies were more ancient than the western civilization. However, there was some discontinuity in the spread of these values across different geographical regions and social

groups due to intermittent disturbances through alien incursions. It is not our intention here to discuss these issues and relate them to that of the recent developments in the modernist project. Our idea is to point out that there were indigenous thinkers whose enlightenment project was independent of the colonial rule. Phooley and Ambedkar[2], alongwith M.N. Roy[3], R.M. Lohia[4], K.B. Krishna[5] and others, are a different category of personalities who were involved in this mission. They need to be distinguished from that of Rammohan Roy, Theosophical Society, Jawaharlal Nehru and others of that genre whose project was by and large confined to the higher echelons of society. The reformist and the modernist projects of this category of modernists were basically used to reform the 'dvija' community so as to prepare a generation to enjoy the fruits of freedom and western knowledge. But, the indigenous thinkers particularly Ambedkar, had concentrated on the weaker sections, including women, in the modernist project.

Out of the several movements that Ambedkar had initiated for the upliftment of the weaker sections and women in general, and dalits in particular, education and industrialization are found to be permanent offsprings throughout his active public life. It is to be remembered here that he was shaped by great minds of the western liberal tradition of the US and the UK of the first half of the 20th century. John Dewey had an indelible influence on him. He was a great educationist. The cosmopolitan intellectual climate in London introduced him to the writings of classical writers and the air at that time was full of liberal, progressive and working class movements that brought innovative ideas for industrial development. It was, therefore, natural for Ambedkar to prepare an agenda of modernization. It is reflected in one of his addresses to the All India Trade Union workers study camp in 1943. Ambedkar has said that, "the labouring classes themselves failed to acquaint itself with literature dealing with the governments of mankind. Everyone from the labouring classes should be acquainted with Rousseou's Social Contract, Marx's

Communist Manifesto, Pope Leo XIII's Encyclica on the conditions of labour and John Stuart Mill's Liberty to mention only four of the basic programmatic documents on social and governmental organization of modern times".[6] He has advised them to disassociate themselves from capitalist and communal political parties like Hindu Mahasabha. This shows his ideological leanings. Similarly, his All India Radio talk in 1954 on "My Personal Philosophy" confirmed that his philosophical commitment has remained intact without any change.

There is difference between the modernist thinkers of India of the early 20th century and Ambedkar. Majority of such thinkers, including Jawaharlal Nehru, were influenced by the English liberals and utilitarians while Ambedkar, being a part of this group, had maintained his identity separately with roots in India. It was inevitable for him to retain this unique character as his agenda of modernization was addressed to the dalits. Though one can find some overtones of bringing the Irish and Wales example of broken men to narrate the untouchable situation in India in the beginning, he slowly started studying Indology and even got admitted as a scholar with the German Indologist Jacobi.[7] Ambedkar's modernist agenda was basically aimed at projecting the essentialism of man. He has used it to judge Hinduism by saying that, "if all men are equal, all men are of the same essence and the common essence entitled them to the same fundamental rights and to equal liberty",[8] why dalits alone are treated as untouchables. In this context, he has even addressed those thinkers who were against the western concept of equality. He said that the Hindu concept of equality is insensible to reality, as it treats everyone as equal before Brahma. This abstract philosophy of divineness attributed to every individual in Hinduism has no relationship with the prescriptions of daily life. In fact, Ambedkar has pointed out the weakness of this religion by saying that there is neither fraternity nor equality in it as the Brahmins alone are divided into 2,000 sub-castes. Thus,

Ambedkar, unlike other modernist thinkers, first examined whether Hinduism was really useful to accommodate the modernist ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. And, he concluded that the modernist ideas like equality, humanism and the power of human beings to reshape their own destiny do not fit into an inegalitarian religion like Hinduism. Therefore, he advocated for the annihilation of caste, the essence of Hinduism. This is the difference between Ambedkar and other modernist thinkers of India. We are not going to discuss here about the relationship between Buddhism and his modernist project. It is an irony that scholars specializing in modernism never bothered to examine the modernist project of Buddhist Asia as a non-western concept and related it with its historical roots in India.[9] Once it is done, it will bring out the relevance of Ambedkar. That is however beyond the scope of the present study.

The foregoing discussion on the modernist project of Ambedkar was made to understand him as the forerunner of modernism in India as an independent thinker. There are also several South Indian contemporaries like E.V.R. Periyar,[10] K.B. Krishna and others and his own guru Jyoti Rao Phooley, his predecessor in this endeavour. But, the project of Ambedkar is found to be more concrete and sustained than the others in the area of dalit development. In this context, the practical work of Ambedkar in the development of education for the upliftment of dalits and others is found to be very important. The introduction of Hindu Code Bill in 1951 to provide the right to property to daughters and the right to divorce to Hindu upper caste women became the testing ground in parliament to classify who were the real modernists.[11] In order to achieve the goals of modernization, Ambedkar chose education and industrialization as the two important tools. He had been emphasizing on the importance of education to ameliorate the conditions of the poor from the very beginning of his public life in 1917 till the end of his active life. Though he mentioned about the industrialization as a remedy to

overcome the backwardness of rural areas briefly in his article in 1918[12], he has elaborated on this in his passionate observations on public sector in his mature writings in 1947 and thereafter. The contributions of Ambedkar to these two important issues as methods of achieving modernization in India are discussed in the chapters that follow.

Notes

1. Rao Bahadur Srinivasan, represented the dalits in the Round Table Conference along with Ambedkar. Meghanad Saha is one of the greatest scientists of pre-independence period who paved the way for scientific revolution in India came from West Bengal is a person from the depressed classes.
2. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phooley was considered by Ambedkar as his spiritual guru. In certain respects Phooley was more radical than Ambedkar in attacking the Brahmin supremacy in India. He was the one, who first started the educational movement for dalits in 19th century and went to the Hunter Commission with a memorandum paving the way for reservations in educational institutions from 1882.
3. M.N. Roy attacked the nationalist Swaraj by saying that, "it will be a modernized Brahmin Raj, an intellectual aristocracy wielding absolute power which is their monopoly power because the multitude is by nature deprived of that qualification". *Selected Works of M.N. Roy,* Oxford, Delhi, 1989, p. 110.
4. R.M. Lohia was another independent thinker who wanted to bring modernization to uplift the dalits. Though he has attacked the leaders at that time saying that "all politics in the country, congress, communist or socialist has one big area of national argument, whether by design or through custom and that is to keep and disen-franchise sudra and women who constitute over three-fourth of our entire population". *The Caste System,* Hyderabad, p. 5.
5. K. Satyanarayana, "A Forgotten Intellectual of the South", *Mainstream* December, 20, 1980. K.B. Krishna studied in Harvard and London like

Ambedkar. He was a communist and appeared to have taught A.K. Gopalan and others in prison. He wrote on Hindu materialism and on the minority question which was considered by UNESCO as one of the two publications universally recognized on the subject. His book on political and social thought of the Buddhist writers, completed in 1930 and published posthumously later in 1960s, is a great work. There are several similarities between K.B. Krishna and Ambedkar.

6. Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches,* Vol. X, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, p. 110.
7. Maren B. Schempp, "Ambedkar Studies at Heidelberg", www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de
8. Vasant Moon (ed.) op. cit., Vol. III: "Does Hinduism Reorganise Equality?"
9. Social scientists seem to have concentrated on the concept of modernization as a western gift to the eastern societies in the form of colonialism. The meaning of modernism in the South Asian societies, which have a different ethos due to the teachings of Buddha and Confucius, led to the same results of modernization of the west, is not generally highlighted by scholars.
10. E.V. Ramasamy Periyar's teachings and mission are very close to Ambedkar. In fact, he was influenced by one of the greatest dalits thinkers of the 19th century, Ayothi Das, who was the contemporary of Mahatma Phooley and a forerunner of Ambedkar.
11. It is a well-known fact of history and record that Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the architects of modern India, supported Ambedkar on this in the beginning and when it was put before the parliament for voting, he backtracked due to pressure from communal/Hindu forces. Ambedkar resigned from his government as a protest on this issue, is a part of history now.
12. B.R. Ambedkar, "Small Holdings and their Remedies", *Journal of Indian Economic Society,* Vol. I, 1918.

Two

Educational Philosophy and Practice

The contributions of Ambedkar to the education sector are considered to be more significant than his social and political works as the former is going to deliver long-lasting and permanent benefits to the community. It appears that the educational studies of Ambedkar have not attracted the much-desired attention of scholars and activists, though most of his followers still chant the three charanas of "educate, organise and agitate". It is also clear from these words that Ambedkar has given significant and primary position to education than to other activities. If one is inclined to divide his movement into three parts as educational, social and political, the proportion of time, energy and intellect devoted by Ambedkar to education seem to be equally important. Therefore, I intend to study the contributions of Ambedkar as an educationist in terms of his works as a researcher, teacher, academic administrator and builder of educational institutions. He has held specific

philosophy of education which he tried to practise throughout his life.

Philosophy of Education

The influence of John Dewey, one of the greatest educationists of the 20th century, on Ambedkar appears to be deep and permanent. Ambedkar himself has claimed Dewey as his mentor and quoted him in almost all of his works relating to social and philosophical issues. Dewey, who taught Ambedkar at the Columbia University in the USA, was a pragmatist and humanist, also was one of the signatories of the first International Humanist Manifesto. Ambedkar seems to have realized the significance of democracy in human society due to his teacher's influence. It is interesting to find Ambedkar quoting Dewey's work on 'Democracy and Education' at several places of his studies on social philosophy though he appeared to be a student of Harold Laski in London. Therefore, the influence of Dewey on Ambedkar is indelible. Perhaps, this influence might have prompted Ambedkar to search for a rational and democratic religion to adopt. He finally embraced Buddhism claiming that it was the only religion that was built on democratic principles. Even, as a researcher, one can find in Ambedkar the influence of Dewey.

The research studies of Ambedkar upto 1923 appear to be serious academic pursuits. His studies on currency and finance have been acclaimed as very important contributions to Economics during that period. Further, Ambedkar's methodology in approaching a problem is another significant contribution to social sciences. In all his serious writings, Ambedkar has adopted the deductive method, i.e., first approaching the issue from its historical context, explaining the theoretical under-pinnings behind the issue and finally providing the necessary information and data in support of his arguments. The conclusions drawn by Ambedkar in these works are well supported by meticulous

research. In this respect, the contributions of Ambedkar as an academic researcher excel and are well comparable to that of Dadabhai Naoroji and other first generation economists of the 20th century.

Information in English language on Ambedkar is inadequate to understand him as a teacher. But, the little information that is available in print suggests that as a teacher in Sydenham College of Commerce (as Professor of Economics) and Government Law College (as Professor of Jurisprudence), he was very popular. Students studying in the neighbouring colleges, it is said, used to attend his eloquent lecture sessions in these colleges. He has also worked as the Principal of Government Law College, Bombay. He has used his practical experiences as a teacher and administrator in discussing issues relating to education in the Bombay Legislative Assembly. Ambedkar studied the most prestigious subjects of his times in the world famous universities in Europe and USA. One can see the significance of his degrees which the dalits fondly attach to his name as if it is a historical revenge against a society that denied them education, but achieved by their leader in one generation.

Benefits of Education Emphasized

Ambedkar's views on education seem to have remained unchanged and further strengthened in course of time as compared to his views on other issues where one can find some volatility. He has firmly believed that primary education is very important for depressed classes as it provides the necessary background to enter into public life. He said that "we may forego material benefits of civilization but we cannot forego our right and opportunity to reap the benefit of the highest education to the fullest extent as education is the greatest material benefit". Ambedkar was not parochial in arguing for more funds for primary education of dalits alone. He has made a universal appeal

to the government to provide more funds to impart primary education to all sections of the people. In his Legislative Council debates in Bombay Assembly during 1927 on grants for the education sector, Ambedkar made a historical appeal for grants for education. As an economist and also an educationist, perhaps, Ambedkar is the first person in the country to calculate the costs and benefits of education. He has provided empirical examples in illustrating his point that investments made on education are much more beneficial than Back Bay (Bombay) reclamation. He has also said that, "I find that the increase in the number of pupils is certainly not commensurate with the increase of expenditure on education. If we take the statistics from 1916–17 to 1922–23, we find that the expenditure on education has increased by something like 100 per cent, while the increase in the number of pupils during the same period is only 29 per cent. We have in this presidency two departments which if I may say so are working at cross-purposes. We have the Department of Education, the purpose of which is to *moralize and socialize people* (emphasis added). We have, on the other hand, the Department of Excise, which is working, if I may say so, in the reverse direction. I plead that we should at least spend on education the same amount that we take from the people in the from of excise revenue. The amount of expenditure that we incur per individual in this presidency on education is only 14 annas, but the amount of money that we recover in the form of excise revenue is Rs. 2-2-9 (Rs. 2.17). I think it is only fair that our educational expenditure should be so adjusted that we should spend on the education of the people as much as we take from them in the form of excise".[1] This argument is still valid in our country in terms of the excise duty contributed by the poor and the educational benefit that they receive from the government in return (which is very low). In other words, no government should grudge in paying for the primary education of the people, as it is they who pay for their education through excise and other indirect taxes. Ambedkar has

made it clear that, "the object of primary education is to see that every child that enters the portals of a primary school does leave it only at a stage when it becomes literate and continues to be literate throughout the rest of his life". He has also calculated the dropout rate at that time being 82 per cent in primary education and lamented that if the same trend continues in future, all of them would lapse into illiteracy. The economist in Ambedkar has argued that, "I therefore request the Honourable Education Minister to spend more money on primary education, if for nothing else at least for the purpose of seeing that what he spends bears some fruit ultimately. Sir, this argument is not very different from the argument that was urged from the official benches in the matter of Back Bay reclamation. We were urged to spend money on Back Bay because we were told that if we do not spend more money on Back Bay what we have spent will be an utter loss. I think, the same argument might be utilized in this case, as well, and we can say that unless we spend a sufficient amount of money, to see that every child that enters school reaches the fourth standard, what we have already spent upon him is of no purpose whatsoever."[2] He has also discussed about educational finance and sources of finances of education. He has criticized the government that a major proportion of the expenditure (31 to 36%) on education was collected from the students by way of fees and thus converted education into a business (more details given in Chapter 3).

Compulsory Primary Education for All

The major contribution of Ambedkar to the field of education in general and to depressed classes in particular is his memorandum submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission in 1928 by the Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha. Quoting extensively from the report of the Board of Education and Hunter Commission, Ambedkar had argued that Mohammadans are given due share in the education

sector by considering them as a minority and similar benefits should also be extended to the depressed classes. It may be relevant here to quote him saying that, "I am not making this statement in any carping spirit nor grudge the efforts that government have made in the matter of the education of Mohammadans. I must here emphasize that this country is composed of different communities. All these communities are unequal in their status and progress. If they are to be brought to the level of equality, then, the only remedy is to adopt the principle of inequality and to give favoured treatment to those who are below the level. There are some I know who object to this and adhere to the principle of equality treatment. But, I say government has done well in applying the principle to the Mohammadans. For I honestly believe that equality of treatment to people who are unequal is simply another name for indifferentism and neglect. My only complaint is that government has not yet thought fit to apply this principle to the backward classes. Economically speaking or socially speaking, backward classes are handicapped. I, therefore, think that the principle of favoured treatment must be adopted in their case."[3] In the context of the recent controversy on reservations, it is necessary to make the anti-reservationists (including the government) to read these lines of Ambedkar for its logical and rational argument developed in favour of equality of opportunity.

University Education to Impart Principles

Ambedkar has also written and commented on the university education including its administrative structure. He has explained that the objectives of university education is to train students, (a) to make distinction between matter of fact and matter of opinion, (b) to distinguish issues and to separate questions each on its own merits and without an eye to their bearing on some cherished theory, (c) learn to state fairly the position to those to

whose practical conclusions the learner is most stoutly opposed, (d) be able to examine suggested idea and see what comes of it, before accepting it or rejecting it, and (e) to develop an original student who should be able to weigh evidence to follow and criticize argument and put his own value on authorities. He has further stated that a university is a corporation of scholars and a place of learning in the pursuit of advancement and diffusion of knowledge. In this context, he has criticized the Bombay University, which did not fit into the above description of a university at that time. In his Assembly interventions during the Bombay University Amendment Act and through his written evidences before the University Reforms Committee in 1925, Ambedkar has fully utilized the opportunity to express his ideas on higher education. He has indicated that the primary function of a university is not merely to conduct examinations; it is an institution to provide opportunities to all capable people to develop their faculties. He has argued for the representation of different castes on the senate to control the university affairs equitably. Ambedkar's idea of pooling the teaching resources of city colleges to avoid duplication and to improve efficiency is still valid and worthy of implementation. In most of our metropolitan cities dozens of colleges are offering similar courses by employing teachers with same qualifications. Ambedkar therefore argued that if these resources are pooled, specialization in teaching can take place, which may ultimately benefit the students. He has seriously opposed the distinction between undergraduate teaching and postgraduate teaching. He said that, "It is in the best interests of the university that the most distinguished of its professors should take part in the teaching of the undergraduates from the beginning of their university career. It is only by coming into contact with the junior students that a teacher can direct their minds to his own conception of his subject, and train them in his own methods and hence obtain the double advantage of selecting

the best men for research, and getting the best work out of them."[4] Perhaps, Ambedkar must have thought that the young university teachers should be provided with opportunities of practical training in the form of undergraduate teaching. This was how university teachers in those days were trained within the department by the head of the department, Ambedkar wanted to institutionalize it. This idea of training for the university teacher is relevant in its approach to teaching in the context of the recent emphasis on orientation for college and university teachers.[5] Ambedkar has also proposed inter-collegiate teaching. He argued that teachers in the university should go to the affiliated colleges to teach and obtain sufficient experience as teachers. He is perhaps the first educationist who has given sole power to the academic council in matters of academic affairs in the university. He has emphasized that a teaching university should really function as a teachers' university in the sense that all academic administrative posts should be held by teachers. However, he did not agree with the introduction of the post of Rector as the functions of the Vice Chancellor and that of the Rector are overlapping. In his evidence, before the University Reforms Committee, Ambedkar has given a broad perspective plan for the development of university education. He has emphasized that universities should be established in those places where the concentration of colleges is taking place. He has proposed ten universities in 1926 in the country including the one at Karachi. The present classification of the university departments on the lines of schools was first insisted by Ambedkar for the Bombay University. In order to control the affiliated colleges, Ambedkar suggested that all seats in the colleges be processed through the university and the university should be involved in the payment of grants-in-aid to the colleges. There are several other ideas of Ambedkar which are found to be quite relevant today to make the university system effective and accountable.

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As an Educational Pragmatist

The most significant contribution of Ambedkar as an educationist is his pragmatic approach to education which he learnt from his teacher John Dewey. He has practised what he taught and popularized. In this context, we can find that he has started the people's education movement with the establishment of several colleges and educational institutions by first inaugurating the People's Education Society on 20th June 1946. Several groups of institutions have been started in all fields of education at all levels under the influence of this society, which is still active. As an educational historian, Ambedkar pointed out that the first educational scheme for untouchables was started in 1855 in Ahmednagar and the first application from an untouchable was received by the government in June 1856 at Dharwar. He has criticized the British for their policy of providing education to upper classes of society including Brahmins, and neglecting the dalits (see the next chapter for details). He has argued that unless sufficient places in public employment are provided, the depressed classes do not have an incentive to get educated. Therefore, he appealed to the government to provide scholarships and hostels for the untouchable students so as to encourage them to get educated. Even, in his Independent Labour Party manifesto, Ambedkar has mentioned about free and compulsory primary education. Perhaps it is the only political party to date which has emphasized on education in its election manifesto. Article 45, under the directive principles of the Indian Constitution, is the sole contribution of Ambedkar. This article provides for free and compulsory education to the ignorant masses of this country. But, our rulers are still exhibiting callousness in their approach to fulfil this obligation. This speaks volumes about the perspective with which Ambedkar has incorporated Article 45 in the Indian Constitution.

The overall assessment of Ambedkar as an educationist puts him as the forerunner of people's education movement in this

country and even he surpassed his contemporaries like Mahatma Gandhi in his pragmatic approach to education. As an educationist, he has an approach, with a clear vision and a strategy to achieve the objectives. He has practically demonstrated that separate educational institutions for the weaker sections and in backward regions will go a long way in making the people of India literate and educationally advanced.

Notes

1. Moon, V. (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1982, Vol. II, p. 9.
2. Ibid., pp. 39–40.
3. Bombay Legislative Debates, p. 42.
4. Ibid., p. 298.
5. Chalam, K.S (ed.), *Academic Staff Development in Higher Education*, K.P. Bagchi & Co., Calcutta, 1993.

Three

A People's Movement for Universalization of Education

The development of education in India as a universal right is considered to be of very recent origin. Though the British are given the credit of being the benefactors of universal education in India, the historical evidence does not support this claim. The argument between Mahatma Gandhi and Sir Hortog is a known controversy in educational history as Gandhiji could not substantiate his claim that there was universal education in India before the British came to this country.[1] It is equally true that the British have failed to provide educational opportunities to every citizen in this country. It was only after the Woods Despatch of 1854, the British government took some interest in the educational development of the natives. It was Jyoti Rao Phooley who, in his memorandum to the Hunter Commission in 1882, accused the British for their penchant in providing educational opportunities only to the upper castes, while collecting huge revenue from the illiterate Shudras and Atishudras. One can say

that this is the beginning of a movement for mass education in the country (see Annexure I). However, no systematic attempt was made by any known leader thereafter for the educational upliftment of the poor in the country. It is in this context, the role of B.R. Ambedkar as a protagonist of universal compulsory education for all need to be viewed. The universal compulsory education is the be all and end all of mass education in India. Perhaps he is the only leader of the pre-independence period who had a vision for a people's education movement to realize universal education for all.

Contextualizing Ambedkar

While contextualizing Ambedkar movement as a protest movement, M.S. Gore, Gail Omvedt and several social scientists have placed Ambedkar as a leader of the untouchables. He was never projected by the mainstream scholarship as a positive contributor to the overall social and educational development of the country. He has been a victim of reductionism and in this context some of his followers are also responsible in joining the bandwagon of reductionism. Therefore, one of the important contributions of Ambedkar to Indian society—the "educational development"—has been eclipsed.

It is brought out by scholars now that there were great leaders in South India such as Ayothidas (1845–1914), Ayyankali (1863–1914) and others who have preceded Ambedkar in their mission of amelioration of the social and educational conditions of the dalits. But, the contributions of these savants did not attract the all-India character as Ambedkar did. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the contribution of Ambedkar to the mass educational movement in India. It appears that there is no parallel to Ambedkar during the pre-independence movement in matters of intellectual input into the arguments that the country needed universalization of education. In this context, Ambedkar seems to

have been influenced by his teacher and philosopher, John Dewey of Columbia University.

Very few Indians in the 20th century had deliberately chosen to get educated in an open society like the USA. One among these was B.R. Ambedkar and the other prominent figure was Jayaprakash Narayan. Though both the leaders differ in their struggles and outlook, there was a common bondage that could put them together. It was their strong belief in democracy. The United States of America at that time was trumpeted as the symbol of liberty and, therefore, democracy. There was also a reason for this. One of the prominent advocates of democracy and a great pragmatist was teaching in Columbia University and spreading the message of democracy through his disciples. It was John Dewey, a great educationist and a democrat. This has, perhaps, attracted the attention of Ambedkar and he chose to study in Columbia University. In fact, the formative years of Ambedkar were shaped by the academic atmosphere in Columbia and particularly the lectures of Dewey. We will find in the writings of Ambedkar quoting regularly Dewey in support of his arguments. Ambedkar got his postgraduate and doctoral degrees from Columbia, which is even today considered to be one of the liberal campuses in the USA.

Scholars have written elaborately about the contributions of Ambedkar to philosophy, sociology and religion among other fields. But, there are very few attempts by scholars to project him as a great educationist. In fact, more than half of his life was spent in educational institutions. Even, while he was in the thick of politics he took interest in the educational programmes of dalits. Out of 65 years of his precious life, he spent around 40 years as student, scholar, teacher and promoter of education. Therefore, it is necessary to understand and analyse his contributions to the development of education in India in general and to the educational upliftment of weaker sections in particular. In the formulation of special provisions for scheduled castes and other

backward classes in the Constitution, Ambedkar seems to have consciously chosen the concept of "educationally and socially backward classes". He knew that those who were considered as backward or uncivilized at that time were the ones who were denied education. Therefore, Ambedkar had been assiduously fighting for the educational rights not only of dalits, but for the illiterate and ignorant masses of the country. It is unfortunate that experts in education in India seldom recognize these contributions.

John Dewey's Influence on Ambedkar

It is essential that we should reflect here on the educational philosophy of Dewey (briefly referred in previous chapter). The influence of John Dewey on Ambedkar is so profound that he himself has declared in June 1952, after he was conferred an honorary degree in Columbia University, that I owe my whole intellectual life to Prof. John Dewey. This intellectual allegiance of Ambedkar to Dewey can be seen in every aspect of his active public life, including his social and educational movements. The essence of Dewey's pragmatism or practical idealism is projection of the ideal of democracy. His concern is that democracy should permeate every aspect of people's lives, including the way people think and philosophise. As Gordon L. Ziniewicz observed that the term 'democracy' of Dewey is not confined to actual or potential political regimes, but extends to every facet of human culture.[2] Democracy, for Dewey, is a way of life, the method of thinking, a manner of approach, a habit of expecting the unexpected, an attitude of openness to novelties and variety of flexibility in actively attending to and adjusting facts and conditions as they present themselves. The greatest influence of John Dewey on Ambedkar can be seen in John Dewey's emphasis on the precept that "the people and the relations have to be democratic before democratic institutions can have any meaning".[3]

Out of six important works of Dewey, the book on *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, which was published in 1916, had influenced the progressive world, including Russia and China, at that time. It is here Dewey says that, "democracy cannot go forward unless the intelligence of the mass of people is educated to understand the social realities of their own time".[4] "Education", he said, "is a social process to reconstruction of society". These ideals have influenced Ambedkar in taking up the agenda of development through democratic national building. Therefore, many of his programmes, including education, remained the foremost in his agenda of upliftment of the depressed classes. Even, from the beginning of his political career, he was interested in education.

Subsidies for Education

It is necessary to bring here the total intellectual contributions of Ambedkar to the educational development of the mass of people. He is perhaps one of the first economists in the world who had realized the economic importance of education. In his debates in the Assembly and Parliament, one can find the tenor of his argument in favour of subsidies for education in general and for the weaker sections in particular. As stated earlier, in the Bombay Presidency Legislature debates in 1927, he argued: "We should at least spend on education the same amount that we take from the people in the form of excise revenue. The amount of expenditure that we incur per individual in this Presidency on education is only 14 annas, but the amount of money that we recover in the form of excise revenue is Rs. 2-2-9 (Rs. 2.17). I think it is only fair that our educational expenditure should be so adjusted that we should spend on the education of the people as much as we take from them in the form of excise." He has also calculated the fees income at different levels and argued that it financed 36 per cent of expenditure in collegiate education, 31 per cent high school and 26 per cent middle school education. Higher education

should be made cheaper so that lower classes (not necessarily low castes) can enter it and benefit from the opportunities it creates. He had lamented that educational institutes were running on commercial lines during the British Raj. His words are prophetic that today higher education has become a business that does not recognize merit, but only money power.

He was also emphatic in his arguments about the devolution of functions between college and university. He was not at all favourable for professorial positions in the university who do not bother to teach and benefit undergraduates. He gave written evidence before the University Reforms Committee wherein he had elaborately discussed the objects of higher education and functions of various committees, etc., which are still relevant. He has also argued in favour of more powers for the university syndicate and also delineated the functions of senate and syndicate in debates on Bombay University in the Bombay Assembly. He was of the opinion that the object of postgraduate education is to train the student "to learn to distinguish between what may fairly be called matter of fact and what is certainly mere matter of opinion".[5]

Ambedkar was found to be a thorough academic in his approach to problems with practical insights. He has a total understanding of education starting from primary to university level. He has expressed his scholarly vision on research. He spent most of his life for the development of education and even after retirement from active political life, he took interest in the development of educational institutions. He is the first among many Indians who had initiated a people's education movement for the poor in India.

Legislative Debates on Education

In the Bombay Presidency debates of 1927 and 1928, Ambedkar has raised several issues relating to education which became important for policy formulations on education. In his

memorandum to the Simon Commission on "Concerning the State of Education of the Depressed Classes in Bombay Presidency", submitted on behalf of the *Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha,* he gave numerical data to bring out the miserable condition of the untouchables in the education sector. He has pointed out that enrolment of the dalits constitute 0.87 per cent of the total primary education and 0.14 per cent in secondary and zero in higher education. Therefore, he wanted protection for the dalits through education guarantee by making the education of the depressed classes as the first charge on the state revenue. In his budget debates he has also projected the practice of untouchability in municipal schools of Bombay where separate 'lotas' were given to dalit boys. This, he said, made them to drop out from schools. This is a great economic wastage.

In his memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission on behalf of the Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha, Ambedkar had provided for the first time an authoritative account of the educational underdevelopment of the mass of people in India. (The data as presented by Dr. Ambedkar is given in the next chapter). In his detailed note Ambedkar mentioned that education under the British rule in the Bombay Presidency must have a beginning with the foundation of the Bombay Education Society. It was later named as Bombay Native Education Society and was headed by Mount Stuart Elphinstone. But, the progress achieved by this society was, according to him, minimal. After presenting the data, he has pointed out that "what do these figures show? They show that although mass education was the policy of the government, the mass were as outside the pale of education as they were before the years, 1854 and that the lowest and aborigine classes of the Hindus still remained lowest in order of education".[6] The problem with the British policy of education, according to him, was its partial attitude in favour of the elite. The Court of Director's Report on Education mentioned that "it is our anxious desire to afford to the higher classes of the natives of

India the means of instruction in European sciences and of access to the literature of civilized Europe. The character which may be given to the classes possessed of leisure and natural influence ultimately determines that of the whole people".[7] Thus, he found that the education in the British India was confined to few upper classes only. Ambedkar here provided the information and the arguments to show that the landlords, the higher employees and the Brahmins were the real upper classes who were benefited by the British education. Therefore, he wanted that the subsidy given by the British to education, in fact, should provide opportunities to everyone of the depressed classes much less the untouchables.

Mahatma Phooley, who was considered by Ambedkar as his guru, was the first Indian who raised the issue of educational development of the mass of people before the Hunter Commission in 1882. It was four decades later that Ambedkar provided sufficient data to prove what Mahatma Phooley had brought to the notice of the British in 1882. In fact, he has extended the argument of Mahatma Phooley as his spiritual heir, asking for the British support for universalizing education. In his debates in the Bombay Presidency Legislative Assembly, he has opposed the introduction of Compulsory Primary Education Act as it shifted the responsibility of educating the people from government to the school boards. He pointed out that the school boards would again implement the mandate of the elite as they are dominated by higher classes and with little funding. It is irony that the country is still debating on the free and compulsory education to the mass of people even after sixty years of independence.

Ambedkar's Recommendations for Mass Education in 1928

It is instructive here to know what Ambedkar has recommended for the success of compulsory education of the depressed classes in 1928. They are as follows:

1. Unless the Compulsory Primary Education Act is abolished and the transfer of primary education to the school boards is stopped, the Sabha fears that education of the depressed classes will receive a great setback.
2. Unless compulsion in the matter of primary education is made obligatory and unless the admission to primary schools is strictly enforced, conditions essential for educational progress of the backward classes will not come into existence.
3. Unless the recommendations made by the Hunter Commission regarding the education of the Mohammedans are applied to the depressed classes, their educational progress will not be an accomplished fact.
4. Unless entry into the public service is secured to the depressed classes, there will be no inducement for them to take education.
5. In making these comments upon the management of the educational affairs of the Presidency under the reform in their bearing upon the depressed classes, the Sabha is not oblivious to the special provisions made for the education of the depressed classes in the form of a few hostels and a few scholarships for higher education. But, the Sabha begs to point out that it is useless to make provision for higher education of the depressed classes unless steps are taken to ensure the growth of primary education. Besides, there is no guarantee that such concessions will continue. On the other hand, they depend a great deal upon the policy of the particular Minister-in-charge of Education and upon the voting strength of the depressed classes in the Legislative Council, both of which are uncertain factors and cannot be depended upon.

Constitutional Remedy

Not satisfied with the progress made by the dalits during the British rule in the area of mass education, Ambedkar has deliberately chosen to include the compulsory education for the age group 6–14 in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India. It is mentioned in the Article 45 that "the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years". It is a matter of great satisfaction to all of us that the present government is serious in bringing the Free and Compulsory Education Act soon. There are a few weaknesses in the draft Bill which need to be corrected at the time of framing rules. For instance, the definition of habitation in the Bill is not clear as it does not include the dalit *bastis*, which are not generally recognized in revenue records. There is also no mention about the opportunity costs of education of dalit children. In the process of recruitment of teachers as envisaged in the Bill there is no mention about reservations. As the problem of dropouts is basically related to the disadvantaged groups in the rural areas, it is necessary to incorporate some inputs in the curriculum that familiarize and empathize the teachers about the problems of disadvantaged children.

The people's education movement, initiated by Mahatma Phooley, was taken up by his legitimate spiritual heir Ambedkar. He has, in fact, strengthened the movement with his incessant observations both in the legislative debates and outside. Like his predecessor, Ambedkar started the People's Education Society in 1946 to fulfil some of his obligations to the society and to put in practice what he was preaching. His vision for universal compulsory education to democratize not only education but also the Indian polity is bearing fruit now in the form of Free and

Compulsory Education Bill, which is pending before the Parliament from 2003. This would not have been possible had he not put strategically Article 45 in the Constitution. We are sure, the proposed Act will become a great tribute to the contribution of Babasaheb Ambedkar to mass education, when it is materialized.

Notes

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2. Gordon L. Ziniewicz., *Democracy and Imagination:* The Practical Idealism of John Dewey, www.fred.net
3. Ibid.
4. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, 1916, reprinted Simon and Schuster, 1997.
5. Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches,* Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, 1989.
6. Ibid., p. 10.
7. Ibid., p. 6.

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Four

Economics of Dalit Education

Economics of Education, a specialized branch in Economics, has come into prominence after the annual conference of the American Economic Association in 1960. Though economists have been trying to prove that the elements of economics of education did exist in the writings of Plato, William Petty, Adam Smith and other classical economists, the real theoretical debate started only in 1950s in the West. The scope of discussing the economic value of education in India, which has borrowed the subject from the English speaking countries, therefore, appears to be remote in the early part of the 20th century. However, the first Indian economist, who has used the jargon of economics in the legislative debates arguing for funds for education in the late 1920s, is found to be B.R. Ambedkar. He was a trained economist who was also taught by a great educationist, John Dewey in Columbia University and realized the value of education for his community for the first time in India. Much before Ambedkar had realized the importance of education for dalits, his spiritual guru Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phooley had submitted a memorandum to the Hunter

Education Commission in 1882 in which he urged the British to spread primary education among the depressed classes of India. It was Phooley who criticized the British for the spread of higher education at the neglect of primary education. He has questioned the British who collected an educational cess from the natives and were utilizing that amount for the benefit of upper classes. Therefore, the conditions and the situations under which Ambedkar developed the economic arguments for the spread of education were conducive to bring out the economic aspects of education.

The subject matter of economics of education takes into consideration the utilization of scarce resources for the development of education. The costs and benefits of education, the finances of education, the wastage involved and the material significance of education are the broad issues, which B.R. Ambedkar has analysed in his writings and speeches. It is found that he has submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission, made a written statement before the University Reforms Committee, gave an elaborate speech in the Bombay Legislative Assembly on grants for education, etc., wherein he clearly spelt out his ideas on the economic value of education and suggested measures for the development of education in India.

On Economic Value of Education

Ambedkar's views on education seem to have remained consistent and further strengthened in course of time as compared to his views on other issues wherein one can find some variations. He has firmly believed that primary education is very important for depressed classes as it provides the necessary background to enter into public life. In his Bombay Legislative Council debate on the Bombay University Act in 1927, Ambedkar had an argument with K.M. Munshi that communal representation is essential in education for the overall development of the society.

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It is in this context that he has emphasized the economic value of education. He said that, "we may forego material benefits but we cannot forego our right and opportunity to reap the benefit of the higher education to the fullest extent as education is the greatest material benefit".[1] Ambedkar was not parochial in arguing for more funds for the development of primary education for Scheduled Castes (SCs) alone. He has made a general appeal to the government to provide for more funds to extend primary education to all sections of the people. In 1927, in the Bombay Legislative Council debates also, Ambedkar made a historical appeal for grants for education. As an economist and also as an educationist, perhaps, Ambedkar is the first economist in the country to calculate the costs and benefits of education. He has provided empirical examples in illustrating his point that investments made on education are much more beneficial than the Back Bay reclamation. I am citing here the paragraph once again at the cost of repetition to show how Ambedkar was categorical in his remarks. He said that, "I find that the increase in the number of pupils is certainly not commensurate with the increase of expenditure on education. If we take the statistics from 1916–17 to 1922–23, we find that the expenditure on education has increased by something like 100 per cent, while the increase in the number of pupils during the same period is only 29 per cent. We have in this Presidency two departments, which if I may say so are working at cross-purposes. We have the Department of Education, the purpose of which is to moralize and socialize people. We have, on the other hand, the Department of Excise which is working, if I may say so, in the reverse direction. I plead that we should at least spend on education the same amount that we take from the people in the form of excise revenue. The amount of expenditure that we incur per individual in this Presidency on education is only 14 annas, but the amount of money that we recover in the form of excise revenue is Rs. 2-2-9 (Rs. 2.17). I think it is only fair that our educational expenditure

should be so adjusted that we should spend on the education of the people as much as we take from them in the form of excise".[2] The economist in Ambedkar has argued that, "I, therefore, request the Honourable Education Minister to spend more money on primary education, if for nothing else at least for the purpose of seeing that what he spends bears some fruit ultimately. Sir, this argument is not very different from the argument that was urged from the official benches in the matter of Back Bay reclamation. We were urged to spend money on Back Bay because we were told that if we do not spend more money on Back Bay what we have spent will be an utter loss. I think, the same argument might be utilized in this case, as well, and we can say that unless we spend a sufficient amount of money, to see that every child that enters school reaches the fourth standard, what we have already spent upon him is of no purpose whatsoever".[3]

Ambedkar has calculated the sources of finance for education at different levels of education. He has indicated that 36 per cent of the expenditure on colleges comes from fees. Similarly, fees income constitutes 31 per cent of expenditure in primary schools and something like 26 per cent in middle schools. He says that the education department is not a business unit whose expenses can be treated on the basis of quid pro quo. The principles of public expenditure which Ambedkar learnt from Seligman have been effectively used in the budget debates to get more funds for the educational activities. His argument that education, including higher education, ought to be made cheap to lower classes of society at a stage when they are just getting into schools, is found to be theoretically justified.

Education for Dalits

The major contribution of Ambedkar to the education sector in general and to the depressed classes in particular can be examined in the memorandum submitted by him to the Indian Statutory

Commission in 1928. Quoting extensively from the report of the Board of Education and Hunter Commission, Ambedkar had argued that Mohammadans are given due share in the education sector by considering them as a minority and similar benefits should also be extended to the depressed classes. He has also given the necessary data to prove his point. In Table 1 we have provided the enrolment of students at various levels of education in the Bombay Presidency during 1923–24 (as calculated by Ambedkar). The figures indicate that there were 18 boys per 1,000 population in primary education and less than one in secondary education and at the collegiate level there were none among the backward classes. If we compare the enrolment of students of various castes at different levels of education in 1881–82 (Table 2) with that of the enrolment in 1923–24, we can find that there is a decline in the educational status of all communities in the Presidency. However, there is slight increase in the enrolment, rather the presence of the backward classes in the secondary education. But, the enrolment of the backward classes is found to be zero at the collegiate level both in the years 1881–82 and also in 1923–24. This has encouraged Ambedkar to argue that the backward Hindus are found to be in the order of 2nd position in population and in education they are at the 4th position. He has concluded from the statistics that, (1) the state of education of the backward classes in this Presidency is deplorable: while in the matter of population they occupy a place as high as second, in the matter of education they occupy a place which is not only last but which is also the least; (2) that the Mohamedans of the Presidency have made enormous strides in education; so much so that within the short span of 30 years, they have not only stolen a march over other communities such as the intermediate and the backward classes, but have also come close to the Brahmins and allied castes.[4] The main reason for this progress among the Muslims, according to Ambedkar, is the encouragement and unequal treatment given by the government.

Therefore, Ambedkar argued that the same protectionist policy be extended to the backward classes on the merits of its economic value to the beneficiaries. However, he said, "I am not making this statement in any carping spirit nor grudge the efforts that government have made in the matter of the education of Mohammadans. I must here emphasize that this country is composed of different communities. All these communities are unequal in their status and progress. If they are to be brought to the level of equality, then, the only remedy is to adopt the principle of inequality and to give favoured treatment to those who are below the level. There are some I know who would object to this and adhere to the principle of equality treatment. But I can't say that the government has done well in applying the principle to the Mohammadans. For I honestly believe that equality of treatment to people who are unequal is simply another name for indifferentism and neglect. My only complaint is that government has not yet thought fit to apply this principle to the backward classes."

Economically or socially speaking, backward classes are handicapped. I, therefore, think that the principle of favoured treatment must be adopted in their case.[5] In the context of the recent controversy on reservations, it is necessary to read these lines of Ambedkar for its logical and rational approach developed in favour of equality of opportunity in education.

Educational Development

The influence of John Dewey, one of the greatest educationists of the 20th century, on Ambedkar appears to be deep and permanent. Therefore, Ambedkar approached the problem of educational upliftment of the masses as a pragmatist. He has not developed any theory as such for the development of education, but has consistently observed the historical facts and the contemporary realities in education before prescribing or recommending measures to develop education in the country. In his statement

concerning the status of education of the depressed classes in the Bombay Presidency, submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission in 1928, Ambedkar demanded that the government should focus on scholarships, hostels, compulsory primary education, etc. (see Annexure II).

Table 1

Students per 1,000 Population in Bombay Presidency, 1923–24

	Primary	*Secondary*	*College*
Advanced Hindus	119.0	30.0	5.0
Mohamedans	92.0	5.0	0.26
Intermediate Classes	38.0	1.4	0.27
Backward Classes	10.0	0.14	nil

Source: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 2, Government of Maharashtra, 1982.

Table 2

Status of Education of Various Classes in Bombay Presidency, 1881–82 (per 1,000 population)

	Primary	*Secondary*	*College*
Christians	4.9	22.6	30.0
Brahmins	201.7	402.9	500.0
Other Hindus	646.9	—	—
Cultivators	—	28.5	10.0
Low Castes	8.7	0.0	0.0
Other Castes	—	320.4	213.0
Mohamedans	125.4	20.4	15.0
Parsis	11.2	196.0	215.0
Aboriginal & Hill Tribes	8.7	0.0	0.0
Others (including Jews)	1.2	8.8	4.0

Source: As in Table 1.

Apart from the arguments that Ambedkar has made for the educational upliftment of the depressed classes, he was always in favour of providing education to all the people without any distinction of caste, creed or religion. Therefore, he used to argue for the diversion of more funds for education including the revenue collected through excise duty to education in his budget debates in the Bombay Presidency. He has convinced the members of the assembly that how the expenditure on primary education is beneficial to the community. He has indicated that out of 2,479,000 children in the age group of 6–11, only 754,000 or 30 per cent of the children are in schools and the rest have remained as out-of-school children. All of them can be provided education, Ambedkar argues, if Rs. 1.30 lakh are given in the budget, which is not a very big sum.

Ambedkar has also written and commented on the university education, including its administrative structure. We are once again repeating here what Ambedkar has said about university education. He was emphatic that the objectives of university education are to train students (a) to make distinction between matter of fact and matter of opinion, (b) to distinguish issues and to separate questions each on its own merits and without an eye to their bearing on some cherished theory, (c) learn to state fairly the position to those to whose practical conclusions the learner is most stoutly opposed, (d) be able to examine suggested idea and see what comes of it, before accepting it or rejecting it, and (e) to develop an original student who should be able to weigh evidence to follow and criticize argument and put his own value on authorities. He has further stated that a university is a corporation of scholars and a place of learning in the pursuit of advancement and diffusion of knowledge. In his Assembly interventions during the Bombay University Amendment Act and through his written evidences before the University Reforms Committee in 1925, Ambedkar has fully utilized the opportunity to express his ideas on higher education. Ambedkar's idea of pooling of the teaching resources of city colleges to avoid duplication and to improve

efficiency is still valid. In most of our metropolitan cities dozens of colleges are offering similar courses and employing teachers with the same qualifications. Ambedkar, therefore, argued that if these resources are pooled, specialization in teaching can take place which may ultimately benefit the students and reduce the cost. He said that, "it is in the best interest of the university that the most distinguished of its professors should take part in the teaching of the undergraduates from the beginning of their university career". This idea has freshness in its approach in the context of the recent emphasis on orientation for college and university teachers. Ambedkar has also proposed inter-collegiate teaching. He argued that teachers in the university should go to the affiliated colleges to teach and thus obtain the experience to become good teachers.

He is perhaps the first educationist who has given sole power to the Academic Council in matters of academic affairs in the university. He has emphasized that a teaching university should really function as a teachers' university in the sense that all academic administrative posts be held by teachers. In his evidence before the University Reforms Committee, Ambedkar has given a broad perspective plan for the development of university education. He has emphasized that universities should be established in those places where the concentration of colleges is taking place. He has proposed ten universities in 1926 in the country including the one at Karachi. The present development of the university departments on the lines of schools was first insisted by Ambedkar for the Bombay University. In order to control the affiliated colleges, Ambedkar suggested that all seats in the colleges be processed through the university and the university should be involved in the payment of grants-in-aid to the colleges. There are several other ideas of Ambedkar which are found to be quite relevant today to make the university system effective and accountable.

Thus, the policy measures and strategies, as suggested by Ambedkar for the development of education starting from primary to university, are full of innovative ideas, and have

practical significance too. Interestingly, some of those ideas are gaining popularity in recent times in our national policy of education. The most significant part of his contribution is in the area of economics of education. He was perhaps one of the earliest in India to use the principles of public finance and other economic arguments in making his point clear in matters of education. Thus, he became the precursor of a separate specialization in Economics called the 'Economics of Education'.

Notes

1. Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1982, p. 62.
2. Ibid., pp. 39–40.
3. Ibid., p. 40.
4. Ibid., p. 41.
5. Ibid., p. 42.

Five

Educational Policy of East India Company and Modernization

Several studies undertaken by western scholars on Ambedkar are now available in India to evaluate his contributions to socio-economic and political aspects of a movement. It seems, however, there are very few studies interpreting his contributions to the field of education. In fact, Ambedkar spent more than half of his life as a student, scholar, teacher and educational institutions builder. He was influenced by great educationists like John Dewey at Columbia University and spoke on education several times in the Bombay Legislative Assembly. He has availed this opportunity to express his opinion on university education. Among his many contributions to the field of education, his comments on the educational policy of the East India Company, which was responsible for the foundations of western liberal education in India, seem to be more relevant today. Therefore, I

have chosen this topic to deal with in this chapter. In fact, the comments of Ambedkar on the university education are also important today in view of the rapid developments that are taking place in the field of higher education. We will discuss this once we know about the relevance of his comments on the education policy of East India Company to bring home how his views on education are related to all levels starting from school education to university level. In all his writings and speeches on education, Ambedkar had a vision that this education should liberate the traditional mindset and usher in rational thinking to discard superstitious beliefs and practices.

British Education Policy before 1854

One of the very exemplary characteristics of Ambedkar is that he used to express his opinions and submit memoranda whenever an occasion arose during the British rule in India and represented the pathetic conditions of dalits on all such occasions. In one of his memoranda to the Simon Commission, Ambedkar submitted a detailed note consisting of the state of education of the depressed classes in the Bombay Presidency. He has submitted the memorandum on behalf of the Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha on 29th May, 1928. In this memorandum, Ambedkar brought to the notice of the Commission the educational policy of the British government towards dalits.

It is to be noted that the rule of the East India Company continued in India till 1858. But, its educational policy had to continue till the appointment of the Hunter Commission in 1882. Therefore, the comments of Ambedkar on the educational policy of the British government in India are applicable for the whole of the 19th century. Though he has commented on the educational policy of the British government up to 1928 in his memorandum, we have not taken those comments here for our analyses (see previous chapters for details).

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Ambedkar is perhaps the second Indian after Mahatma Phooley, who has clearly brought out the fact that the education policy of the East India Company did not bother about the common people as the British government deliberately ruled that education was to be made a preserve of the higher classes. In order to prove this point, Ambedkar quoted extensively from the educational despatches of the East India Company. He quotes from the report of the Court of Madras in 1830 which reads as follows:

> "The improvements in education, however, which most effectively contribute to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of a people, are those which concern the education of the higher classes—of the persons possessing leisure and natural influence over the minds of their countrymen. By raising the standard of instruction amongst these classes, you would eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and the feelings of the community than you can hope to produce by acting directly on the more numerous class. You are, moreover, acquainted with our anxious desire to have at our disposal a body of natives qualified by their habits and their acquirements to take a larger share and occupy higher situations in the civil administration of their country than has been hitherto the practice under our Indian Government."[1]

Ambedkar has further examined the policy statements of the East India Company in their reports forwarded to the headquarters in London. He has quoted the relevant paragraphs in his memorandum to show how the British spent very little on education ignoring on the one hand the common people and how the whole amount was devoted for the educational upliftment of the Brahmins and the upper castes, on the other. In para 7 of the same report, Ambedkar noted that the East India Company was very clear about their educational policy. It reads as follows:

> "It is our anxious desire to afford to the higher classes of the natives of India the means of instruction in European Sciences and of access to the literature of civilized Europe. The character which may be given to the classes, possessed of leisure and natural influence ultimately determines that of the whole people." [2]

English Education for Upper Classes

It is obvious from the above that the British government was interested only in a small section of the population who could be brought under the influence of government (English) education in India. It is in this context, Ambedkar analysed in his memorandum to the Simon Commission, who constituted this small section of the population in India. He has indicated that the following groups who deemed to be influential and in so far the upper classes in India:

1. The landowners and jagirdars, representatives of the former feudatories and persons in authorities under native powers and who may be termed the soldier class.
2. Those who have acquired wealth in trade or commerce or the commercial class.
3. The higher employees of government.
4. Brahmins, with whom may be associated though at long interval those of higher castes of writers who live by the pen such as Parbhus and Shenvis in Bombay, Kayasthas in Bengal.

Elaborating further on these four classes, Ambedkar remarked that incomparably the most influential, the most numerous and on the whole easiest to be worked on by the government are the latter. It is a well-recognized fact throughout India that ancient jagirdars or the soldiers class are daily deteriorating under British rule. Similarly, the employees of the

state to some extent have no influence and finally the most influential according to British are the Brahmins. Ambedkar says that the above analysis, "though, it may appear lengthy, is nevertheless indispensable for certain important conclusion deducible from it. First, it demonstrates that the influential class whom the government are able to avail themselves of in diffusing the seeds of education are the Brahmins and other high castes". He has also quoted from Mount Stuart Elphinstone in the memorandum who in a different context wrote to the British that education for the lowest castes were to be extended. But, the British did not listen to him. Therefore, Ambedkar concluded that during the period before 1854, the policy of the East India Company was against the depressed classes and they were denied the share in the blessings of education.

Later, in the memorandum, Ambedkar provided data to show how the representation of lower caste Hindus was confined only to 0.87 per cent in primary education and no representation either in secondary or in college education was ever found before 1854. Ambedkar cited from the dispatches of East India Company that the Company was very unambiguous in their policy against the education of the depressed classes. In paragraphs 14 and 15 of the dispatch, Ambedkar said, the British were of the opinion that "education in civilization may descend from the higher to the inferior classes and so communicated may impart new vigour to the community, but they will never ascend from the lower classes to those above them, they convey, if imparted solely to the lower classes, would lead to general convulsion, of which foreigners would be the first victims... if, we desire to diffuse education, *let us endeavour to give it to the higher classes first*" (emphasis added).[3] This is the essence of East India Company policy of education. It also shows how the Company was scared of the Brahmins and the rich in matters of social policy concerning the masses.

Ambedkar Continued the Legacy of Phooley

It is not out of place to bring in the comments of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phooley, Ambedkar's spiritual guru, who in another context expressed similar comments on the education of the East India Company in his memorandum to the Hunter Commission in 1882. Mahatma Phooley, in his memorial to the Commission, said that, "One of the most glaring tendencies of government system of high class education has been the virtual monopoly of Brahmins on all the high offices under them. If the welfare of the Ryot is at heart, if it is the duty of government to check a host of abuses, it befits them to narrow this monopoly day by day so as to allow a sprinkling of the other castes to get into the public services.

My object in writing the present volume is not only to tell my Shudra brethren how they have been duped by the Brahmins, but also to open the eyes of government to that pernicious system of high class education."[4]

The sentiments expressed by Mahatma Phooley about the education policy of the East India Company are almost repeated by Ambedkar in the next century in 1928. But, the content remained the same that the British have neglected the education of the dalits and the poor and have concentrated on the educational development of the upper castes and Brahmins.

Opinions on University Education

It is also necessary here to bring in the ideas of Ambedkar about the university education expressed in his written reply to the Bombay University Reforms Committee. These are the comments on the existing university structure laid down by the British based on their requirements and not related to the needs of Indian people. If we look at the opinions expressed by him on the objectives of university education as given below, it will be clear to us that he has a broad vision about university education for

Indians. This was different from the then existing British model of university education:

1. That it is scientific, detached and impartial in character.
2. It aims not so much at filling the mind of the student with facts or theories as at calling forth his own individuality and stimulating him to mental effort.
3. It accustoms him to the critical study of the leading authorities, with perhaps occasional reference to first-hand sources of information and that it implants in his mind a standard of thoroughness and gives him a sense of the difficulty as well as the value of reaching at truth.
4. The student so trained should learn to distinguish between what may fairly be called matter of fact and what is certainly mere matter of opinion.
5. He should be accustomed to distinguish issues and to look at separate questions each on its own merits and without an eye to their bearing on some cherished theory.
6. He should learn to state fairly, and even sympathetically, the position of those to whose practical conclusions he is most stoutly opposed.
7. He should become able to examine suggested idea, and see what comes of it, before accepting it or rejecting it.
8. He should gain an insight into the conditions under which original research is carried on without unnecessarily becoming an original student.
9. He should be able to weigh evidence to follow and criticize argument and put his own value on authorities.

He has also expressed strong views about the relations between affiliated colleges and the university administration. He was of the view that government should have no control over the academic affairs of the university. He has put forward an innovative idea that the duration of study for postgraduate degree

in social sciences should be four years. There may be two stages of two years each. At the end of the first stage, the candidate should be entitled to the MA degree and should specialize in one subject only which should be the subject of his major interest. The test should consist of a written examination accompanied by an essay of some 75 type-written pages showing his familiarity with the art of using original source and commenting upon them. At the end of the second stage, the candidate should be entitled to the PhD degree. There, the test would include an oral examination and a thesis of a considerable size fit for publication. He has always upheld the dignity of the teacher. In explaining the criterion of the teaching university, Ambedkar has proposed that both the teaching and academic business should be under the control of the teachers. "A teaching university is a teacher's university", he said. He has argued for reservation of places in the universities, senates and syndicates to represent the interest of the weaker sections. He wanted the use of vernacular as a medium of instruction at all stages of education. Some of his innovative ideas of pooling teaching resources at one place in urban areas appear to be more relevant today than ever before.

An Evaluation of the Relevance of Ambedkar's Views on Modernization

After examining the comments of Ambedkar on the East India Company and British educational policy and his views on university education, we are now left with an opportunity to evaluate him and his ideas. There are scholars who are examining the education policy of the British as an agency of modernization. These scholars have brought out clearly that during the British rule in India, there were three categories of modernization projects:

1. The native modernity, wherein the native princely states, while keeping their identity as independent of the British,

have followed a policy of education of their own. We can see this from the educational policy of Travancore, Baroda, Mysore, Vijayanagaram, Parlakimidi, etc., princely states. The maharajas or princes in these states have provided liberal education to the people and occasionally granted scholarships to dalits. One of the beneficiaries of this project in the Baroda state was Ambedkar himself. His education in Columbia was sponsored by Baroda Maharaja.

2. Colonial modernity was implemented by the British in their provinces and in areas which were under the control of their agents, the Jamindars, etc., a different policy was followed. It was already mentioned above by Ambedkar and Phooley that the education policy of the colonial rulers have carried benefits of modernization for the upper castes and Brahmins only.

3. The National Modernity Project originated in Bengal. It started as a conflict between Orientalists and Anglicans. The project was represented by Ram Mohan Roy and supported by Macaulay and Bentick. Ram Mohan established an Anglo-Indian College in 1816 and started receiving grants from the government. They have advocated the teaching of European sciences and English literature with English as the medium of instructions. Some of the British officers thought that "by their birth as well as by their learning, (Brahmins) exercise a powerful influence on the minds of every order of the community". In other words, the British have used the Brahmins as conduits of their enlightenment or educational policy. In fact, some educationists like Lancelot Wilkinson, Political Agent of Bhopal, and a well-known Sanskrit scholar, translated Bhaskar's *Siddhantha Shiromani* into English so as to offer it in the Sanskrit colleges.[5] Thus, he prepared a band of pundits who learnt both Puranas and European astronomy at one place. The idea of the British was to convert them to

be western in outlook and later question the distortions in the Puranic lore. In fact, J.R. Ballantyne, the Principal of Sanskrit College at Banaras, had introduced an innovative pedagogical method of introducing indigenous text along with European texts so that the pundits can subsequently refute the inconsistencies in the Jyotish Sastra or Puranic cosmology. This has been elaborated very clearly in an article published in *Economic and Political Weekly* very recently.[6] The educational policy of colonial India was interrogated by scholars now, who support our argument.[7] Thus, this nationalist project is continued even today in the form of western models of education through privatization.

It is now possible to evaluate the relevance of Ambedkar in the context of present controversies over the educational policy vis-à-vis reservation policy in India and the debate on modernist projects. The purpose of Ambedkar's memorandum to the Simon Commission was to point out the fact that the British have never benefited the dalits or the depressed classes. The three kinds of modernist projects of education mentioned above seemed to have benefited upper castes and Brahmins. Is there any change now in the paradigm of the colonial rule?

After a brief interval, the age-old 19th century situation appears to have been repeated now.[8] It is left to the scholars to refute or accept this formulation. Therefore, we feel that there is no wonder why the same communities or groups, who had abundantly utilized and benefited by the modernist projects in the past, naturally question any deviation from the past? We are not concluding anything now, except to point out the fact that the comments of Ambedkar on the educational policy of the East India Company are still relevant in the context of the sway of neo-colonial powers in India?

Notes

1. Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches,* Vol. II, Government of Maharashtra and CD by Dr. Anand Teltumbde.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Phadke, *Selected Works of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phooley,* Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1989.
5. Margret Frenz and Georg Berkmer, "Colleges and Kings: Higher Education under Direct and Indirect Rule", *Economic and Political Weekly,* April 2006, p.1261.
6. Rajiv Tiwari, "A Transnarrative for the Colony: Astronomy Education and Religion in 19th Century India", *Economic and Political Weekly,* April 1, 2006, p. 1269.
7. Manu Bhagawan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India,* Oxford, New Delhi, 2003.
8. Sharp, H., *Selections from Educational Records,* Government Press, Calcutta, 1920.

Six

Higher Education for Dalits after Globalization

Ambedkar has fought for the educational opportunities for dalits during his lifetime. In fact, he has started colleges for the benefit of the dalits as he knew that "the status and conditions of the Scheduled Castes will be improved only when the representatives of the Scheduled Castes come to occupy executive posts as distinguished from ministerial posts ... such posts will not be open except to those who have acquired advanced education" (Grievances, Vol. 15). In this context, higher education, as a source of knowledge and skill development, could be considered as a universal and democratic right of every human being. It was recognized as a right by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Researchers have established that the rate of growth of an economy is positively correlated with the rate of growth of literacy and education. It is proved beyond doubt that the advancements in science and technology can be passed on from one generation to another and from one group to the other only through

education. It is, therefore, supposed that without education, particularly higher education, it is difficult to survive in a modern technological society. Further, the human development paradigm has raised the importance of education, longevity and income as crucial elements that enlarge the people's choice.

In its 2004 report, the UNDP has recognized the importance of cultural diversity and emphasized to address injustices historically rooted and socially entrenched so that all groups can actively participate in the development process. One of the important factors that make the socio-economic exclusion visible is education. The economic opportunities are related to the educational attainments of people in modern society. The 'knowledge society' has come of age. Therefore, redressing that exclusion requires a combination of policies, the UNDP has indicated the following:

1. addressing unequal social investments to achieve equality of opportunity,
2. recognizing legitimate collective claims to land and livelihoods, and
3. taking affirmative action in favour of disadvantaged groups.

The Human Development Report, 2004 has devoted a substantial part of its argument on the basis of the affirmative action policies pursued in India, Malaysia, USA and South Africa. "Educational and occupational reservations have also made lasting impact on India's political system. The entire structure of political power has changed since independence, beginning with South Indian states. A new political leadership has emerged from among the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. In almost all states the beneficiaries of reservations occupy important positions in government and positions in lower levels of bureaucracy" (UNDP, 2004: 71). This is the first time that the issue of reservations has been referred to in an international debate by a UN agency. This is a recognition of

the positive aspects of the affirmative action followed by the Government of India for the last few decades.

However, the opportunities created through the affirmative action in education and employment in India were limited to the public sector. The little progress that the dalits have made during the five decades of post-independence period has started dwindling during the liberalization period of the last one decade. There are several policy changes that have affected the educational opportunities of the dalits. The post-independent public education was almost a continuation of the colonial mode of liberal education. The government has realized the lacunae and corrective measures such as creation of institutes of excellence like IITs, IIMs, new course structures, vocationalization of education have been initiated. But, these courses and opportunities were confined to the elite of the forward castes. The dalits have not realized the importance of these courses and therefore remained outside the purview of vocational education except engineering and medical courses.

Post-independent Progress in Education

In school education for dalits, a brief review of the educational progress during the post-independence period indicates the gaps and shortcomings of the policy. The following are some dichotomies that have emerged out of the progress:

1. The literacy levels of the people in general and females in particular are still very low compared to developed countries.
2. The literacy gap between males and females, between forward castes and scheduled castes and between males and females among these communities are very high.
3. The literacy level of urban dwellers including dalits in all parts of the country is around 80 per cent and therefore the

problem of illiteracy in the country is related to only rural areas and of dalits and some OBCs.

4. The educational strategy of Madhya Pradesh government, like the Educational Guaranteed Programme (EGP), has helped to increase the literacy levels in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh as per 2001 census that includes the literacy levels of dalits.

5. The enrolment levels at primary education presented in Table 1 show that they are increasing from 1980–81 and have reached a record level of 18.6 per cent of the total enrolment in 2000–01. This is in excess of the proportion of the population of SCs. As it is gross enrolment, there is a possibility of incorporating in it the backlog of enrolments. However, the data are to be disaggregated at the taluk/mandal level to find out the gaps.

Table 1

Educational Development of Scheduled Castes at School Stage, 1980–81 to 2000–01

(in '000)

Year	*Primary*	*Middle*	*Higher Secondary*
1960-61	(12.0)	(8.7)	(7.1)
1980-81	10,981(14.8)	2,223(10.7)	152(10.5)
1985-86	13,921(15.9)	3,619(13.3)	1,810(10.9)
1991-92	16,037(16.0)	4,693(11.7)	2,581(12.6)
1995-96	19,176(17.9)	5,445(14.5)	2,741(11.9)
2000-01	21,195(18.6)	6,694(15.6)	3,812(13.8)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total enrolment in that category.

Source: Ministry of HRD, Government of India, 2002.

6. The enrolment at the upper primary level is also nearing the proportion of the population of Scheduled Castes (SCs). However, the enrolment in higher secondary is short of the proportion of SC population. This shows the gap between primary and secondary levels, which is due to high dropout rates at the upper-primary level. The dropout rates among SC girls at the primary stage is very high.
7. The recent Government of India Bill on Compulsory Education, 2003 does not contain any specific reference to the dalits. The Bill has not proposed any strategy of enrolling more number of students from these sections and is silent about reservations in the recruitment of teachers.

Present Situation in Higher Education

The enrolment of dalits into various courses of study in higher education for the year 2000–01 is given in Table 2. The following are some of the inferences that emerge out of it:

1. The enrolment ratios of higher education for different degrees show that they are still remain at single-digit level except for BA and MA. The lowest proportion of students from SCs are found at MCom and PhD levels. The proportion of enrolment in engineering and medicine is considered to be nearer to 10 per cent.
2. The recent incident in Kerala where an SC girl committed suicide for not getting proper response from bankers for an educational loan shows the lacunae in the scheme.
3. The policies pursued by different state governments are responsible for imbalances in the enrolment of SCs in terms of the drawal of post-matric scholarships from Government of India. The states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa are underrepresented in terms of their proportion in the SC population in the country.

4. There are around 20 castes, which are found to be dominant in the entire country in terms of their overwhelming representation in education and literacy.

Table 2

Enrolment of SCs/STs in Higher Education, 2000-01

Class	*Scheduled Castes*		*Scheduled Tribes*	
	No.	*% to total*	*No.*	*% to total*
PhD	3,164	7.0	821	1.8
MA	47,898	11.4	12,911	3.1
MCom	7,540	7.3	1,713	1.6
MSc	11,519	9.0	2,416	1.9
BA	434,597	10.0	164,303	3.7
BSc	18,786	9.1	26,922	1.9
BCom	135,545	9.1	26,851	1.7
BE	36,533	8.7	13,708	3.2
MBBS	14,209	9.5	5,348	3.5

Source: Ministry of HRD, Government of India, 2002.

Table 3

Dropout Rates at School Stage, 2003–04

(in % age)

Category	*Classes I to V*			*Classes I to VII*			*Classes I to X*		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Total*
General	33.74	28.57	31.47	51.85	52.92	52.32	60.98	64.92	62.69
SCs	36.83	36.19	36.56	57.33	62.19	59.42	71.41	75.49	73.13
STs	49.13	48.69	48.93	69.04	71.43	70.05	77.92	81.16	79.25

Source: Annual Report of Ministry of HRD, Government of India, Delhi, 2004.

Who is Responsible for Higher Education?

The Government of India is very careful now in discharging its responsibility for educating the people of India. The World Bank has been insisting since 1986 that the government should concentrate on school education and leave higher education to market. The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action, 1992 are very clear about the educational development of SCs and STs. A separate chapter is devoted to the educational development of SCs and STs wherein the status for school education of the dalits is described. There is no mention about higher education and particularly quality institutions like IITs and IIMs. The government has already brought out the Compulsory Primary Education Bill, 2003. All these initiatives indicate that the government is responsible for primary education of all the people in the country and only up to secondary education for dalits. Interestingly, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission is also not aware of the fact that dalits are underrepresented in professional and vocational education. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment releases the post-matric scholarships to different states on the basis of the requisition from states. It seems, they do not have a mandate to question the underrepresentation of dalits in professional and vocational courses. One can observe from the data in the tables that dalits are now fully represented in school education and in some liberal arts and sciences courses at higher education. But, their representation in the emerging courses that provide opportunities of employment and skills is seriously missing.

The progress of dalits in education is of recent period. The first generation learners amongst dalits have realized the importance of education and have started encouraging their children to go for higher education. It is exactly here that the World Bank and the Government of India wanted higher education to be provided through market. The government has

appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Sri Atal Bihari Vajpai with Mukesh Ambani and Aditya Birla as members in the year 2000. The committee gave a report recommending the privatization and corporatization of higher education. There was no mention about the interests of the dalits. Perhaps, the committee foresaw the implementation of GATS in education from 2005. Already, several private foreign institutions and universities have established their campuses in India to admit students in courses that are considered to be important in the 21st century. Though the idea of privatization was in nascent stage in our education system for a long period of time, it has come out openly after liberalization in 1991. Several colleges and even universities have come up, under the category of self-financing institutions. Interestingly, all these institutions offer vocational and job-oriented courses keeping in view the emerging opportunities in the globalized economy. The dalits have not even realized the existence of such courses nor are they allowed to enter the institutions without paying fees. Once again dalits are excluded from higher education under a different context. The recent Supreme Court judgment on the 93rd amendment of the Constitution validating Article 15(5) will go a long way in all ongoing educational opportunities in quality institutes for reservation groups.

What are the Opportunities Available?

The expansion of the educational development of the SCs can be divided into two periods: the pre-liberalization period and the post-liberalization period (1991 and after). The educational achievements of the first generation of dalits immediately after independence were related to the opportunities created by the state. Several state governments have started welfare hostels to promote school education. Very few opportunities were, however, provided for vocational courses. Therefore, majority of the dalits

have joined the mainstream courses of arts and sciences. The expansion of the public sector during this period helped the educated dalits to get absorbed in this sector. Some of them have appeared for civil services and entered the bureaucracy.

The post-liberalization period witnessed tremendous changes in the field of higher education. There is a revolution in science and technology, consequently it has influenced the communication and information networks. They have affected the education system also. The creation of WTO and GATS have brought in new opportunities of free mobility of resources and technology. This has facilitated the expansion of educational market in response to the needs of the expanding world market. The public sector has started shrinking and the opportunities of employment in secure jobs have disappeared. The dalits have not perceived the danger of dwindling opportunities in public sector and the opening up of ever expanding possibilities in the globalized private sector. The global labour market has started influencing the educational programmes, particularly courses in electronics, computer science and related courses. Practically, thousands of courses are designed to meet every small skill requirement of the job market. In fact, the course structures have undergone a change. There are now two categories of courses: the short life courses and the long life courses. The long life courses require abundant time, resources and knowledge to enter the market. They are very expensive and the benefits are life-long and are useful to the entire society. The short life courses are short in duration. They meet the immediate requirements of any tiny skill. The cost, therefore, is to be borne by the individual as it directly benefits the individual. But, its durability is limited. It runs the risk of short duration and therefore the state does not take the responsibility of providing it on its own. It is exactly here the private sector is expanding to meet the requirements of the growing manufacturing and service sector. This has not been grasped by the dalits, who do not have a social network at the

global level. But, the groups having a historical advantage in education have transformed themselves and already entrenched very much in the global market. This has an impact on higher education. It is now clear that no forward caste person will enter the liberal arts and science courses anymore. On the other hand, all the liberal courses in government and aided colleges are filled in by the so-called reserved categories and the private colleges are left out for the so-called meritorious students. The merit is now bought here. The self-financing courses are related to the emerging areas of skills in the job market. In fact, Ambedkar realized the futility of arts and law courses, "either to the graduates themselves or to the people. It has not been of very high value even to Hindus". Therefore, he recommended that from the point of raising the economic condition, technical education for the SCs is more important than literary education. He has suggested several measures like foreign scholarships, apprenticeships, etc., for dalits to enter into these job-oriented courses.

Some Identified Areas of Study with High Employment Potential

Science and Technology

- Food Science and Quality Control
- Biotechnology
- Biological Techniques and Specimen Preparation
- Seed Technology and Seed Production
- Fish and Fisheries
- Still Photography and Audio Production
- Information Technology
- Aromatic and Medical Plants

- Sericulture Management
- Plant Biotechnology
- Aquaculture
- Fish Production and Management
- Ecology and Environment
- Dairy Science
- Physiotherapy
- Forest Sciences
- Health/Rural Sanitary Programmes
- Rural Health Care
- Medical Lab Technology
- Soil Conservation and Water Management

Engineering and Technology

- Computer Applications CAD, CAM, etc.
- Electronic Equipment Maintenance
- Electrical Equipment Maintenance
- Environment and Water Management
- Soil Conservation and Water Management
- Management of Land, Water and Other Resources
- Rural Infrastructural Engineering
- Agricultural Machinery and Implements
- Post-harvest Technology and Agro Processing
- Non-conventional Energy Management
- Rural Water Treatment
- Irrigation Engineering
- Agriculture Mechanization
- Integrated Health

- Leather and Animal based Technology
- Micro-level Planning

Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

- Rural Handicrafts
- Early Childhood Care and Education
- Food and Nutrition
- Rural Sociology
- Tribal Development
- Women Development
- Rural Housing and Sanitation
- Performing Arts and Rural Awareness
- Transfer of Technology and Development
- Village Crafts
- Handlooms and Textiles
- Printing
- Commercial Art
- Electronic Media and Journalism

Commerce, Economics and Management

- Principles and Practices of Insurance
- Computer Applications
- Management of Delivery Systems
- Micro-level Planning
- Hospitality Management
- Rural Marketing
- Agro-industrial Management

- Tourism
- Rural Cooperatives and Marketing
- Rural Financial Services and Banking
- Planning and Promotion of Agro-based Enterprises
- International Law and WTO
- Empowerment of Rural Women
- Management of Micro Enterprises of Rural Women
- Planning and Management of Self-employment Projects
- Participatory Micro-level Planning
- Community-level Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness
- Social Development and Human Rights
- Gender Strategy for Sustainable Livelihoods
- Social Development in Rural Areas: Strategies and Programmes
- Rural Informatics Management
- Rural Water Supply and Health Care Management

Tribal Areas and Arid Zones

- Agro-services
- Domestic Animal Farming
- Forestry and Wildlife Management
- Non-conventional Energy Sources
- Dryland Agriculture
- Silvipasture
- Sericulture
- Integrated Development of Rainfed/Irrigated Watershed Areas
- Wasteland Utilization and Management

- Anti-waterlogging and Drainage of Soils
- Land Reclamation
- Horticulture Techniques
- Floriculture, Landscaping and Bee-keeping
- Poultry Farming
- Plant Protection
- Processing of Agro-forest Produce
- Mushroom Cultivation
- Fish Processing Technology
- Sheep and Goat Husbandry

Threats of Privatization of Higher Education

There has been a passionate debate about the need for privatization and globalization of higher education to encourage innovations and diversity in knowledge systems. But, the plural nature of our society and the historical context in which the advanced countries are placed have not been brought out clearly in such debates. The higher education system in the USA is privately managed but the students get scholarships and studentships through government and other non-governmental agencies. This is happening today when the enrolment levels in higher education have reached 43 per cent. India can definitely emulate the USA when it reaches at least the level of 20 per cent enrolment in higher education in general and at least 10 per cent for dalits. The overall enrolment ratio in higher education in India today is only 7 per cent. Further, several disadvantaged groups have not reached the portals of higher education. And, those who have reached are far away from the vocational courses. The dropout rate in higher education has been alarming in recent times. The list of job-oriented courses that are indicated above

have emerged in the post-liberalization period and are not known to many dalits even in the urban areas. I do not think that an enlightened education society like the People's Education Society has the economic potential to offer these courses to dalits free of cost. Some of the self-financing courses that are offered in the private sector are not within the reach of the dalits. It requires lakhs of rupees to pay fees for an admission in a course that may fetch a job in the private sector. The dalits are still fighting for the extension of affirmative action in private sector. There are very few dalits who are capable of enrolling in the courses mentioned above. But, the future of higher education and the job market embellish in these emerging areas. The dalits need to understand this and develop their own educational strategies accordingly. Otherwise, they will hold PhDs and other liberal arts and science degrees, but still remain unemployed. They cannot run the risk of spending their hard earned income and time on courses that do not bring any employment. They need to develop their own vision of education. Further, there are several academic and pedagogical problems with which the dalits suffer today. They need to overcome these deficiencies. For instance, computer literacy is a minimum qualification to survive in the modern world. But, many dalits, particularly those who come from rural background, do not have this knowledge. It is necessary to work hard to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities in the emerging areas through hard work and social networking, while arguing with the government to extend the affirmative action also to the private sector. It is exactly here the voluntary action by the enlightened dalits is required. Those who have knowledge and ability to understand the emerging areas of study need to explain to the dalits in the rural areas and to those who are at +2 stage to take science, mathematics and English courses seriously. It is these courses that have a long way to go in the future of higher education in the country.

Conclusion

It is strange that a country like India with several social and cultural diversities is going in for globalization of education for the elite without extending the same facilities to the historically disadvantaged groups. But, in a country like the UK, the government has realized the folly of following a policy of liberalization and privatization of higher education. They have realized the defect and are now saying that, "the expansion of higher education has not yet extended to the talented and the best from all backgrounds. In Britain today, too many of those born in less advantaged families still see the university as a place beyond their reach, whatever their ability. Having a university education brings big benefits and while the government will continue to pay most of the cost involved in studying for a degree, it is also reasonable to ask students to contribute to this. But, we need to make sure that no student is put off from going into higher education because they cannot afford the cost of studying while they are at university". The Secretary of State for Education and Skills of the UK government, Charles Clarke declared in January 2003 that the budget for higher education will be raised from 7.5 billion pounds in 2002–03 to 10 billion pounds in 2005–06 to meet this social demand. The dalits have a strong argument in the proposals of the UK government to ask for the state support and guidance to pursue higher education in the emerging areas of opportunity in the 21st century.

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Seven

Education for Social Empowerment

Once Aristotle was asked how much the educated were superior to the uneducated: "as much", said he, "as the living are from the dead". There are similar references to education available in ancient Indian literature. These nuances clearly indicate the importance of education in human civilization. Education comes next only to the important necessities of life-food, clothing and shelter. It also can help take the people out of the state of abject poverty. But, the kind of education that was conceptualized by the seers and philosophers of ancient civilizations was never made universal. It has remained to be a prerogative of the few. It is only with the advent of the democratic values, education became universal in several countries. There are still areas and groups in the world who are denied access to education due to different conditions and circumstances. This phenomenon calls for a discussion on the role of education in empowering people, as it has been considered as an agency that empowers the beholder. In

fact, Ambedkar has emphasized in his writings on the importance of education, particularly in his book, *What Congress and Gandhi have done to untouchables*. He said that "here as elsewhere, education is the level to which we may hope to raise them, but a difficulty arises at the outset for one class of the community noble feeling... for the children of the pariah community... charges with lack of brotherhood. It becomes, therefore, a necessary task whenever brotherhood is to mean levelling and whether it is usual in family to treat the elder children and babies in exactly the same way?[1] Ambedkar has narrated here how education helps to improve the quality of life of the dalits and brings social empowerment.

Concept of Empowerment

There are two important issues that are associated with the topic of the seminar: education and empowerment. Education was defined by Newman as the "art of utilization of knowledge". Empowerment, a concept borrowed from Feminists, is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as, "ability to do or affect something or anything to act upon a person or thing". This is considered as, "the process of increasing personal or political power so that individuals, families and communities can take action to improve their situations". This concept, however, presupposed the concept of power. The term 'power' has been analysed by social scientists in different contexts. I have elaborated the concept of power in my recent book *Caste-based Reservations and Human Development in India*.[2] I found that power is always exercised through domination and subordination. It depends upon the historical setting, social structure and nature of the state and economy. In the theory of power, social scientists have analysed how a person's power over another person is effected in terms of the behaviour pattern. Scholars like J. Pen classified seven categories of power that includes social power that depends upon the social position of the

subject. The means of power is always exercised through specific actions like promises, threats, controls, commands and so on. This is always manifested in the form of inequalities. One of the important bases of power in modern society is considered to be education. Therefore, it is necessary to understand education as a source of power and also as an agency that empowers people.

There are two approaches in understanding the role of education in empowering people. One, the radical approach of using pedagogy as a conscientization process of the oppressed. The second approach, a transformative project of creating opportunities in the mainstream education to those who are hitherto denied access to education. Let us examine one after the other.

Gramsci and Paulo Freire

In this context, the work and mission of the great 20th century thinkers in education and culture need to be discussed. The analytical tool box supplied by Gramsci in his "Prison Note Books" is relevant here.[3] Similarly, one of the greatest educational thinkers of the 20th century, who was influenced by Gramsci in his praxis, is Paulo Freire.[4] It is possible to synthesize both the thinkers in order to understand their relevance here. Gramsci, while writing on culture and education, critically examined the then European education as an establishment that helped to cement the existing hegemony. Therefore, Gramsci wanted that the educational and cultural formations to play the key role in evading counter-hegemonic action. He has also indicated the forms in which these actions could be built. He has promoted the spirit of equality in adult education spaces in the form of discussion circles, clubs, trade unions, political parties, cultural reviews, etc. Paulo Freire, in his classic *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, brought out a revolutionary theory of education. He wanted that

education be made a liberating exercise rather than a domesticating one. He has introduced several new concepts like banking system of education, dialogic, etc., to elaborate his pedagogy for the oppressed. He wanted that the educator should side with the oppressed and promote learning through dialogue on the basis of the learner's experience with praxis. He insisted that the educator should always be conscious of the cultural background of the class, gender, race, etc., of the subject. Writing on the basis of their relative backgrounds, Gramsci as a political analyst and Paulo Freire as an educationalist, both argued for the emancipation of the oppressed using education, particularly adult education, as an agency.

Education as a Transformative Project

The dominant view of using education as a transformation project is popular among the policy makers. Realizing the need for diversity in a globalized economy, World Bank and other UN agencies are now working for a democratic decentralization of education. In countries like the USA the state is encouraging minority schools to provide meaningful experiences to the learner as a source of power to survive in a globalized economy. It is interesting to notice that these agencies, which had once popularized the concept of participation, have diverted their attention now to 'empowerment'. The purpose of empowerment through education here seems to provide capacity enhancement and capability provisioning. This is seriously reflected in the reports published by World Bank, UNDP and others agencies.

It is instructive to find that the Human Development Report, 2004 devoted considerable space elaborating on historically rooted and socially entrenched injustices. It has recognized that one of the important factors that make the socio-economic exclusion visible is education. It is through the spread of education, the 'knowledge society' has come of age. Therefore,

redressing that exclusion requires a combination of policies. The UNDP has indicated the following:

1. addressing unequal social investments to achieve equality of opportunity,
2. recognizing legitimate collective claims to land and livelihoods, and
3. taking affirmative action in favour of disadvantaged groups.

The Human Development Report, 2004 has devoted a substantial part of its argument on the basis of the affirmative action policies pursued in India, Malaysia, the USA and South Africa. "Educational and occupational reservations have also made lasting impact on India's political system. The entire structure of political power has changed since independence, beginning with South Indian states. A new political leadership has emerged from among the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. In almost all states, the beneficiaries of reservations occupy important positions in government and positions in lower levels of bureaucracy" (UNDP, 2004: 71). This is the first time that the issue of reservations has been referred to in an international debate by a UN agency. This is recognition of the positive aspects of the affirmative action followed by the Government of India for the last few decades.

However, the opportunities created through the affirmative action in education and employment in India were limited to the public sector. The little progress that the reservation categories have made during the six decades of post-independence period has started dwindling during the liberalization period. There are several policy changes that have affected the educational opportunities of the dalits. The post-independent public education was almost a continuation of the colonial mode of liberal education. The government has realized the lacunae and corrective measures such as creation of institutes of excellence like IITs, IIMs, new course structures, vocationalization of

education have been initiated. But, these courses and opportunities were confined to the elite of the forward castes. The disadvantaged groups have not realized the importance of these courses and therefore remained outside the purview of vocational education except engineering, medical, etc. Thus, the project of using education as a transformative project is seriously flawed in India due to several social rigidities.

Let us now look at the educational disparity in India so that we can understand the enormity of the problem of using education for empowerment of the powerless. In India, the powerless are the ones who come from the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). A critical analysis of the status of education among the dalits will throw light on the capacity of education in empowering the disadvantaged. In Chapter 6, a brief analysis of the status of education in India with reference to dalits is provided. It has indicated the fact that dalits, particularly STs are centuries behind unreserved categories in education, particularly in higher education. The response from the state in matters of dalit education is lukewarm as revealed in the high rates of illiteracy and dropouts among these groups for the last six decades (see Chapter 6 Tables).

Dalits are Excluded from Quality Institutes

In a knowledge-based economy empowerment of individual depends upon the amount of knowledge and the quality of knowledge possessed by a person. Though dalits and artisan castes have traditional and indigenous knowledge and are able to survive with that knowledge, it is found that it is not sufficient to survive in a competitive global world. The history of education in India has provided enough hints to understand those who possess knowledge and are in a position to refine it and update it will alone develop and all others either suffer or obtain natural attrition. In this context, we have seen in an earlier chapter that

the modernization projects in India have paid very little attention to dalit's education and empowerment. It was only after Mahatma Phooley and Ambedkar's people's education movement some progress was achieved in Maharashtra. The so-called modernist project of Ambedkar was confined to Maharashtra and to South Indian states and the gift of English did not reach the cow belt consisting of Bihar, UP, MP, Rajasthan, Orissa and even West Bengal, where more than 60 per cent of the Indian dalits live. Even in the state of Maharashtra and South Indian states, the spread of English education was limited to the upcoming middle classes among the dalits. It is no doubt, created an intellectual class and job holders who are emerging as organic intellectuals of the 21st century.

Globalization and privatization of education in 1990s had adversely affected the small minority of upward mobile dalits who were capable of entering into quality institutes like IIMs, IITs and others. The implementation of GATS from 2005 and the popularization of self-financing courses in the vocational stream particularly in higher education, made the dalits to confine to liberal arts and science courses. Realizing the futility of these courses for the dalits in a modern economy, Ambedkar has pointed out around 1945 that, "from the point of raising the economic condition, technical education for the Scheduled Castes is more important than literacy education. But, technical education is also very costly and it is not possible for children of the Scheduled Castes to take technical education and without technical education their economic condition will not be improved" (see Annexure II). Apart from technical education, several job oriented courses are emerging in the private sectors which have potential to get absorbed in private sector. But, the dalits and even some OBCs do not have a knowledge of these courses particularly in the so-called cow belt or Hindi belt. Therefore, the empowering of dalits through education must concentrate on these emerging courses apart from encouraging

them to occupy the void created in social sciences by the upper castes who migrated to greener pastures after liberalization in India.

Limitations of Inclusive Education

The mid-term appraisal of planning process has brought out the gaps and divides in our education. Realizing the impending danger of exclusion of certain social groups like dalits in education, the government has proposed the strategy of inclusive growth for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007–2012). Education is considered here as one of the important factors to achieve inclusion. The notion of inclusive growth has its roots in the European concept of social exclusion. The European Commission has recognized the problem of social exclusion of certain groups of people like the mentally and physically handicapped, single parents, asocial people etc. in 1995. The member-countries of the Commission have adopted several measures including separate ministries to deal with the problem. Thus, it can be considered as a construct imported into India through international agencies. Perceiving this link, our policy makers and some researchers have popularized this concept without knowing its origin, context and relevance. The concept became a preamble to the Eleventh Plan. J.B. Tilak, while evaluating the approach to Eleventh Plan in his article in *Economic and Political Weekly*, has expressed his disappointment for its inconsistencies. He has brought out several contradictions in our educational policy in the so-called inclusive growth strategy of Eleventh Plan. He said that the approach paper is indeed found to be full of "contradictions, lack of vision for development of education, and absence of a critical outlook of the strategies required".[5] He has almost captured the reason for it in his last sentence of the paragraph may be inadvertently, but could not ensign it properly when he said that these polices are "broadly correspond to the suggestions made by the World Bank (2006)".

Educational policy in India has always been given a tepid treatment by the ruling classes since the time of East India Company. The Company has followed a policy that benefited only the upper castes. They have even justified it by saying that, "the character which may be given to the classes possessed of leisure and natural influence ultimately determines that of the whole people". To bring this inequitable and unfair policy to the notice of the British, we have noted earlier that Mahatma Phooley submitted a memorandum to the Hunter Commission in 1882.

The class bias in education is as old as the caste system. No where in the civilized world, a system of education is deliberately promoted to categorize the people into three classes from the stage of primary education. We have in India three classes of schools, one for the wretched of the earth through the municipal-panchayat schools, the aided schools for the middle classes and the private public schools for the rich and possessed. In other words, the future citizens are divided and prepared at the school stage to occupy their mutually exclusive functions in the economy and society. It is a caste system in a different mould. In order to do away with the harmful effects of it, the Kothari Commission, to which Tilak has referred to in his article, recommended a common school. No one has taken it very seriously and it is now almost a formality both in the rural and urban areas that the practice of 'class school' is real. The class school has moved such a long distance today that the rich and powerful in the village, including the sarpanch, do not send their children to the school and put them in an urban school or in the same village in the so-called English medium convent. As a result of it, the panchayat or municipal school became the dumping school for weaker sections. This has an impact on the teachers' attendance and the apathy of indifference of policy makers towards government schools. These conditions have led to the degeneration of the school system. It is a known fact that thousands of vacancies of teachers posts are available at school

stage in all the states and there are very few who raise this issue in the state legislatures or parliament? The SSA, a variant of the World Bank-funded DPEP, is given the charge of the schools and they are accorded, according to Tilak, status equal to formal schooling, thereby making formal school not a basic necessity. Interestingly, if there is any discussion at the Zilla Parishad or a public debate on education, people refer only to SSA and almost forgot about the formal system of schooling. The so-called Compulsory Primary Education Bill is pending before the parliament for the last five years. We do not know whether our planners are aware of it?

One significant departure from the earlier plans is found in the Eleventh Plan in the area of secondary education. The government has recognized that universal education of eight years is not enough for a country that aims at 8-9 per cent growth. In fact, the literature on economics of Indian education is elaborate with contributions by Panchamukhi, Tilak, Chalam and several others to establish the relationship between enrolment as a flow variable or years of schooling as a stock variable and rates of growth of an economy. It is strange that the approach paper being an intellectual output of highest order paid scant attention to these contributions and repeated contradictory statements. However, the Eleventh Plan document need to be commended for recognizing the missing link between elementary and higher education—the secondary education. This is the first time that the government has seriously considered to improve the quality and quantity of secondary education, despite of questionable strategies.

There are several scholarly studies on higher education in India. But, the approach paper seems to be obsessed with the 'knowledge syndrome' in higher education. It is not very clear from the document what do they mean by knowledge and how is it related to higher education. There are epistemological differences between knowledge and education, information and

knowledge and knowledge and wisdom. It appears that the document has assumed that all information including ICT becomes knowledge and it should automatically get into the university education. Tilak has concluded that the approach paper has a limited vision as "skills are equated to knowledge, knowledge is dominated by ICT; and knowledge economy is to be created by vocations and technical education". This logic of the paper appears to be that of a management consultant or HR professional and not of an educationist or planner. Educational planning is an exercise in timing and is a deliberate and conscious choice of educational priorities by a central agency. Higher education, as distinguished from that of school education, creates knowledge. This knowledge needs to be disciplined so as to make it a course structure to be used in universities and institutes. It has a definite process and a time frame. It cannot be produced and supplied like a commodity in the market on the basis of short-term demand. It is heartening to cite here that the first female president of Harvard has remarked recently that, "the essence of a university is that it is uniquely accountable to the past and to the future—not simply or even primarily to the present".[6] The planners have a responsibility to estimate the value of long life of knowledge and short life of knowledge before making policy prescriptions in higher education. The approach paper seems to have plagued with short life of knowledge that reacts to market demand. It is an irony that the malnourished higher education in India is now called as sick child.

The major hitch in the policy of the government comes from the inadequate understanding of the Indian society. The plan document seems to be interested in linking education with the economy and society. It is, therefore, necessary that one must understand the nature of Indian society. However, the concept of social exclusion, from where the question of inclusive growth conceived, is being elaborated by economists who have very limited understanding now about our society. It is alleged that the

generation of economists who are trained in the medium of English and in western concepts have turned out to be good economists, statisticians and technocrats but sadly lesser social scientists. But, the concept of inclusive growth was picked up by them and imported into India have limitations of perception of an economist. Even the concept as developed by the Indian economists has little focus on the structurally divided Indian society. Is it possible to bring inclusive growth by raising the rate of growth of the economy? How is the rate of growth of the economy is related to different stages of education? Is it possible to bring equity through the process of privatization, decentralization, NGOization of education? How is it different from the 'trickle down' theory of education of East India Company that failed to bring universalization of education? Why the government has failed to achieve universalization of elementary education, 60 years after its constitutional vow? Who are the people or groups or castes that are deprived of education and what requires to be done to bring them into the mainstream (inclusive growth)? These are some of the important questions that need to be raised and answered to achieve inclusive education.

It seems that the major flaw in the approach to inclusive growth (education) comes from its limited understanding of the Indian society or may be a westernized understanding of India. India is a land of contradictions and diversities. It is perhaps possible to resolve economic contradictions by achieving a rapid rate of economic growth. But, its impact on the structurally and hierarchically divided society will be nominal as revealed in our historical experience. Thinkers like Paulo Freire explained how literate education has been used as one of the important agents to suppress the disadvantaged groups to carry on the hegemony of the ruling classes. In India, education is neither an economic problem nor purely an educational issue. It is a social enigma. Social exclusion is structurally constructed. Unless the structures

that protect the inequities are broken or at least consciously manipulated, social exclusion will be recreated at every stage in society. The iron frame of caste structure is so strong that it absorbs whatever improvements are attempted and finally allow them to settle within the frame. This unique innovation that has an Indian patent, is reincarnated time and again. This cannot be tinkered with western hammers. We need to innovate methods to weaken the links that are structurally built so that the weakest links become independent and assert their strength to show that they are horizontally as strong as any one else. This is possible by providing additional inputs through a deliberate choice of priorities as advocated by thinkers like Ambedkar, Lohia, J.P. Naik and others.

How does the Present Education Affect Empowerment?

We have examined the present status of education among the disadvantaged groups in India. It is found that there are several gaps in terms of inequalities in enrolment, course structures, access to job-oriented courses, etc. between the elite and the educationally dispossessed groups such as dalits, women, Muslims, etc. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the impact of education on empowerment. The effect of social empowerment can be considered only when the education offered to different categories of people in the society is equitably distributed or accessed. Further, empowerment is considered as "the process of enhancing individual's or group's capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes".[7] If we assume that the education dispensed to different groups is the same, it is possible to measure the outcomes to find out the impact of education on social groups. The World Bank has provided six indicators to measure empowerment. They are as follows:

1.	Psychological Assets	—	Capacity to envisage change.
2.	Informational Assets	—	Frequency of radio listening or access to different media.
3.	Organizational Assets	—	membership in an organization.
4.	Material Assets	—	Ownership of productive assets such as land.
5.	Financial Assets	—	Value of household savings in last year (cash and other assets).
6.	Human Assets	—	Literacy level.

It appears that there are very few studies to indicate how different types of education with varied content of education, influence the empowerment of different social groups. For instance, how the content of a discipline at the undergraduate stage in subjects like electronics, fish and fisheries, biotechnology, food and nutrition, etc., impact the students with different social and occupational backgrounds. How the knowledge base of the subject enhance the capability of the student to break occupational traditions thus caste barriers in India. If a student from a fishermen community studies Fish and Fisheries, does it help him to enhance his understanding about fish. If it does, will he remain in the same sector and gain social acceptability outside his community? Similarly, if a person from a non-fishermen community studies the subject, what is its impact on the society and his community? There are several such questions that need to be answered to find out the impact of education on social empowerment in India. Because, education in India (even if it is uniformly offered) has failed to transform the society from that of a feudal mode to a modern capitalist society where everyone is supposed to be treated as equal before the labour market. The education system and the content are supposed to provide skills and abilities to the people who in turn offer them in the market. Except in a small section of the population in the white-collar occupations, education did not bring any social mobility in India. It seems that the education system has failed to provide the

necessary impetus for social empowerment. There is a growing evidence to show that the system of education as practised in the post-liberalization period has economically transformed several groups and social categories. But, it has failed to bring in a common culture permeating all social groups. If the education system strengthens sub-culture and not a popular culture (not pop culture), which is essential according to educationists to promote fruits of excellence, there is something wrong with our education! It is, therefore, necessary to introduce new educational practices to make the future citizens experience diversity and still appreciate the unity of India. The objective of 'inclusive growth' as enunciated by the Eleventh Five-Year Plan needs to be translated into practice through several educational programmes of the government starting from the school stage to the university level to realize the vision of the founding father of our Constitution.

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Eight

Equity versus Quality Syndrome in Higher Education

The debate on the need for equity in education was first sparked off by Mahatma Phooley in modern India. As explained elsewhere in this book, Phooley in his memorandum to the Hunter Commission wanted the British Indian government to provide equal opportunity in education to non-Brahmins. The Muslim community had also made similar appeal to the government. Therefore, the policy of the British government with regard to public education underwent a change. It is interesting to find that Ambedkar continued the debate in the Bombay Assembly and put forward irrefutable arguments in favour of government's support for education of the backward classes. But, the quality of education remained to be elusive as the Brahmin leaders used to argue that an increase in the intake of students from backward classes into higher education will dilute the standards. It seems the same kind of arguments continued even after independence. It is, however, pertinent here to focus our attention on Ambedkar

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who was a teacher, scholar and administrator of higher education and was as much concerned about the quality of education as anyone else in the community. The profound wisdom shown by Ambedkar in his written replies to the University Reforms Committee of Bombay University can be cited here to indicate that he was very much involved in the quality without compromising on equity. The aim and function of university education, according to Ambedkar, "should be to see that the teaching carried on there is suited to adults, that it is scientific, detached and impartial in character, that it aims not so much at filling the mind of the student with facts or theories as at calling forth his own individuality, and stimulating him to mental effort... and gives him a sense of the difficulty as well as the value of reaching at truth". At the same time, it is found that in the Bombay Assembly debates on Bombay University Amendment Act in October 1927, Ambedkar argued for equality of opportunity through representation on the senate for backward classes. Therefore, the question of equity versus quality is not a new phenomenon. Ambedkar himself addressed this problem and provided concrete programmes to achieve it.

Quality and equity in education are projected as dichotomous in India. It appears that there is very little truth in it. They are not two different issues of a problem. They are not one against the other. In fact, they are complementary to each other, if we look at the recent literature in social sciences. Interestingly, the World Development Report, 2006 is titled as 'Equity and Development' and the Human Development Report, 2005 concentrated on equity. Both the reports have emphasized on the need for providing equality of opportunity to achieve development. It is necessary here to draw from these reports to understand the present predicament of higher education in India, which is suffering with a phobia of equity and quality. The real issue here is about the historical conditions under which higher education was developed in the country and its achievements. It

seems that those who are involved in the policy making have failed to use the intellectual inputs provided by the World Bank, UNDP and other independent thinkers on this issue to resolve the so-called dichotomy of equity and quality.

Equity and Development

The World Development Report has referred to a number of influential thinkers including John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Ronald Dworkin and John Roemer to provide a theoretical background to show how equity promotes development. The thinkers referred to above have shifted their focus of social justice from outcomes to opportunities. It is brought out in the World Development Report, 2006 that the inter-connection and resilience of some of the inequalities imply that some groups have consistently inferior opportunities—economic, social and political—than their fellow citizens. Most people feel that such flagrant disparities violate a sense of fairness, particularly when the individuals affected can do little about them. It is conveyed that markets often work imperfectly in many countries, whether because of intrinsic failures—such as those associated with asymmetric information—or because of policy imposed distortions. Micro-economic case studies suggest that an inefficient allocation of resources across productive alternatives is often associated with differences in wealth or status. Therefore, the World Development Report emphasized that redistribution from richer and more powerful groups to poorer groups that face more limited opportunities, should be pursued. It is also indicated that when considering policy trade-off between equity and efficiency, the full long-term benefits of equity including the development of better and more inclusive institutions need to be taken into account. These arguments are applicable to achieve the objective of equality of opportunities in education because they influence the investments in human capital. It is pointed out that the

perceptions of discrimination—conscious or not—can affect investments in human capital. "Those who expect to be discriminated against in particular labour market—rightly or wrongly, consciously or otherwise—will tend to invest in less in acquiring the type of human capital that the market rewards. This could perversely generate self-reinforcing behaviour. If members of the discriminated group invest less in their own education, or in searching for employment, others might use this underinvestment to confirm their prejudice against that group".

In order to substantiate the argument, the Report has quoted from studies to show how stereotypes influence behaviour. It is instructive to quote from the study conducted by Karla Hoffmann and Priyanka Pandey for the World Bank in the year 2004, which has established that caste system in India is influencing the performance of the students in the classrooms. In the experimental study of Hoff and Pandey two groups composed of three low-caste (untouchables) and three high-caste Junior High School students were asked to solve mazes and were paid based on the number of mazes they solved. In one condition, no personal information about the participants was announced. In a second condition, caste was announced with each participant's name and village. In the third condition, participants were segregated by caste and then each participant's name, village and caste were announced in the six-person group. It was found that when caste was not announced, there was no caste gap in performance. But increasing the salience of caste led to a significant decline in the average performance of the low caste, regardless of whether the payment scheme was piece-rate. When caste was announced, the low-caste children solved 25 per cent fewer mazes on average in the piece-rate treatments compared with the performance of subjects when caste was not announced. When caste was announced and groups were composed of six children drawn only from the low castes, the decline in low-caste performance was even greater. It is concluded by the scholars that

cognitive limitations may prevent others from judging stigmatized individuals fairly. If such beliefs persist, it will generally be rational for those discriminated against to underinvest in the accumulation of skills for which the return is likely to be lower for them. The study is cited here to show how parents underinvest in education from the families belonging to the socially and educationally backward classes in India. Therefore, it is inevitable for the state either to invest in those in whose education there was an underinvestment or take measures to restore equity. As the state is responsible for social investment and rightly so, the recent debate on equity and quality need to be understood in a correct perspective in the overall development of the country and not for the development of a few individuals or groups here and there.

Educational development in western countries, particularly the USA, is cited as an example in most of our discussions to show how quality is maintained in these countries through the process of promoting merit. But, the fact of the matter as revealed in a recent study is different. Daniel Golden has published a book *The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges—and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*. The contents of the book show that less than 60 per cent of the places in elite universities are given to candidates who have some sort of extra 'hook', from rich or alumni parents to 'sporting prowess'. The number of Whites who benefit from this affirmative action is far greater than the number of Blacks. It is reported that Harvard admits 40 per cent of legacy applicants compared with 11 per cent of applicants overall. The author has quoted such discrimination practices in several universities in favour of the rich that is devoid of any merit. The contents are mentioned here to indicate that the quality of education in a university and the students who are admitted to the institutes need not directly be related. On the other hand, if the institutional standards and traditions are so strong, they can even promote equity and development. The discussion that the policy of equity affects quality of higher

education, therefore, has a very weak argument. Prof. Anand Krishna's study of Tamil Nadu for the Moily Committee has also proved this point.

The quality of higher education in India has been discussed in different forums as it is really a matter of grave concern. It is surprising to note that everyone who is interested and has commented on quality of higher education has very little to offer in the debates on equity. In fact, in a country like India, both the issues need to be discussed as they are going to influence the quality of life. It is universally recognized that those who are admitted to higher education are academically bright. There is no doubt that those who are intelligent and possess the necessary eligibility conditions alone will be admitted into post-secondary education (which is called as higher education). But higher education in our country consists of several streams and categories. Each stream of higher education is developed on a different historical setting. Some of the post-secondary educational institutions are brought under the aegis of the university system after the establishment of the three universities in 1858. But, some of the institutions continue to maintain their identity and quality. Though the University Grants Commission (UGC) came into existence in 1953/1956 to maintain standards of higher education, it is, however, not given the mandate to maintain standards of all categories of higher education. Unlike the USA, where land grant system has helped to strengthen higher education, in India, each category of the institutions has a unique history. Religious and social groups have mobilized their resources to educate their own community or group. The inequalities were built-in within the system from the very beginning in India. This needs to be recognized while examining the issues of quality and equity in education.

After the introduction of the Programme of Action 1992, UGC is limited to maintain standards of general higher education. AICTE, ICTE, AICME, Pharmacy Council and several other

organizations have been given the mandate to maintain standards of their own disciplines without an overall coordination among them. An institution called NAAC was created to assess and accredit general higher education institutions, which come by and large under the ambit of UGC. There are also similar organizations to assess quality in other streams of higher education. But, the fact remains that the standards of higher education are different from that of quality. It is alleged that both are deteriorating in India.

Quality and Standards of Education

The concept of quality is related to the inherent character or property of an institution. The concept of standard, on the other hand, takes care of the attainment or agreed level of quality based on some tests. These concepts are even interchangeably used in the literature to indicate the performance of educational institutions in the country. But economists have been using the concept of productivity and efficiency to test whether the education skills used as inputs in the process of production are contributing to positive outcomes. One of the earliest studies on the productivity and efficiency of higher education in the country was attempted by this author in 1980 (Chalam, 1986). It was found that higher education in Andhra Pradesh was internally productive but externally unproductive indicating the relevance of the skills or knowledge obtained by the students to the economy and society. In fact, those who are concerned about quality of higher education have been looking at it only from its internal functioning by using their own yardsticks like marks, publications, etc., and some academic attributes to qualify some people as meritorious. But, the industry and other sectors of the economy that make use of the students in their processes are not concerned about the marks obtained or the merit certificates awarded. They are basically concerned about the skills, the

attributes of knowledge, etc., based on the students' performance in certain functions to produce the expected outcomes. Therefore, they look at the standards or qualities from a practical perspective and not necessarily on the academic knowledge base of the students. They are concerned about overall quality of the individual as an input in the production process. Therefore, we find that there are two different approaches to understand quality of higher education. One, the educational institute's perspective, which is concerned about the education, the skills imparted to a student on the basis of structured curriculum. Two, the perspective of a producer who makes use of a student as an input in the process of production and to entrust him with a specific function to be performed and looks at the quality from his own perspective. Therefore, these perspectives seldom concur with each other. The industry has realized the lacunae in higher education and introduced a strategy called 'on-the-job training' to convert the raw graduates into useful inputs.

The quality of education is now looked at from an international perspective after the emergence of global labour markets. The recruiting agencies are now doing an intermediary function of recruiting raw graduates and converting them into 'packaged labour' (body shopping) with necessary inputs of training to suit the requirements of the industry. This has created the scope for mushrooming of training institutions in the private sector who are doing the short-life functions of higher education leaving the long-life functions to established universities and colleges (see Chalam, 2005). It is very difficult to assess the quality of an educational institution in a complex situation of this kind where the established educational institutions are producing students with given set of objectives. Except, a few disciplines like IT and ICT, majority of the courses offered in the universities and colleges are designed to produce a graduate with a specified amount of knowledge and skills. If, the quality of these products is evaluated from the perspective of the needs of the industry, it is

very difficult to arrive at a conclusion about their relevance. Similarly, the institutes, the colleges and universities, which are assessing their qualities on the basis of their internal functioning, may not meet the quality requirements of the industry. For instance, the criteria used by NAAC to assess the quality of colleges and universities consisted of a set of seven items, such as (i) curriculum aspects, (ii) teaching, learning and evaluation, (iii) research, consultancy and extension, (iv) infrastructure, (v) students' support, (vi) organization and management, and (vii) healthy practices. The above criteria used to assess the quality of institutions. The industry, on the other hand, is interested in a person, as mentioned above, who can deliver the goods. Therefore, the quality of education (or standards) that he expects from the student is measured in terms of his own parameters.

Another challenge, which has emerged in recent times, is the cross-border education and distance education. The parameters of quality here depend upon the origin of the institutions where they belong. They are expected to operate in a host country/state with their own parameters. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the quality here as the requirements of the host country are different from that of the native country. It is exactly here that the quality of education needs to be defined in terms of specific functions for which they are produced. It is also necessary that the knowledge base or the skills imparted must be related to the needs and requirements of the nation with social and cultural dimensions of the knowledge. Measures like TQM, ISO, etc., have limited application to higher education, as they are not concerned about the internal process and its socio-cultural relevance to the nation. The quality (standards) of higher education here needs to be comprehensively defined, so that the institutions must be made to care not only for the internal process of education but also relate the products with their effectiveness outside the institution.

In the recent debate on the provision of additional seats to the 27 per cent OBCs in the so-called quality institutions, a lot of discussion was generated on the availability of infrastructure without any reference to the internal process of higher education. No doubt, we need good infrastructure, sufficient and competent faculty, laboratories, libraries and good administration, etc. But, these facilities alone do not ensure quality. In fact, most of the so-called quality institutes take their inputs after a lot of screening. Naturally, the best brains go to these institutes and it is relatively easy for them to maintain standards. What is essential for these institutes here is to compare the educational outcomes after the students get exposed to these institutes. It can be measured in terms of the comparison of entry standards and outcome standards. For instance, if a student is admitted with 80 per cent marks and gets 85 per cent at the end of the course, one can say that it is not a big achievement. If the institute admits a student with 50 per cent marks and the students can turn out to be a graduate with 80 per cent marks, definitely, it is a great achievement (keeping all assumptions). In fact, we have not fixed our standards in relation to the academic, social and cultural and family background of each student of these institutions. It is also necessary to define the functions for which these groups of students are produced and need to be assessed about their performance after they enter the job. There are several such studies available in the literature on economics of education. Unfortunately, our institutions have not taken the social responsibility of reducing inequalities that exist between students, and groups of students as a challenge. It should form one of the important objectives of our education system and should also be as one of the indicators of quality of higher education. In a country like India where there are several diversities, the opportunities are not equitably distributed. It is necessary that the institutions are made to take the responsibility of bringing equity as equity brings

development as per UNDP. On the contrary, there is no evidence that equity has ever suppressed development.

It is also necessary that the educational institutions should be provided with teachers who are capable of dealing with the problems of diversity. It is not the knowledge base that alone makes a good teacher, it is his ability to communicate and relate himself with the students that makes him an effective teacher. A good teacher is always an asset to an institute and he will be able to overcome the deficiencies of infrastructure, curriculum, etc., to turn the students into quality products. But, unfortunately, teachers in most of the higher education institutions are not given due recognition and their job security is in peril. It is very difficult for a teacher to concentrate on the quality of education if he is not permanent and is not motivated to do research and take the results to the classroom. In fact, the educational institutes have another laudable function. The so-called knowledge (however imperfect or useless it may be) cannot be offered as courses in the colleges and universities as some policy makers think. It requires a different process to convert knowledge into a course. The quality of teachers, students and internal process make significant contributions to achieve this. It is a challenging task for the system. This happens in an atmosphere of collective process of learning without any prejudices. Unfortunately, there are several unhealthy trends that are emerging now in our higher education system, particularly in the professional stream of higher education that causes a concern for educationists.

Problems of Professional Higher Education

Professional higher education in India appears to be in crisis today. This is not a sudden outcome. It has a long history. Some of the professions for which academic degrees are considered as essential, now have evolved over a period of time. In fact, the occupational structure of the country was once closely related to

the varna system in the past. It was only during the British period that some of the occupations got separated from the varna system and have emerged as secular professions. The academic degrees prescribed to occupy these professions have also been designed by the British. In the process, these professions have lost touch with the society with which there used to be an organic relationship. The curriculum designed for some of the professional courses, particularly medical courses, had not really addressed the disease regime of our country. That is why the mainstream medical courses have failed to address the tropical diseases of the country as against indigenous systems. It is alleged that the allopathic medicine had always addressed the European and Western needs. Therefore, it was believed that majority of the medical doctors, who graduated from the medical colleges in the 1950s, and 1960s got automatically absorbed in the USA and UK without much difficulty. But, now, there is a lot of change and development in the curriculum of the courses in medical institutes and colleges and the Indian doctors are made to undergo several entry tests now. This is also true in the case of other professions.

It is perceived in recent times that there is some kind of frustration among medical doctors. This is reflected in several agitations. It is necessary to look at the real-life issues behind such agitations. The years of study for medical courses vis-à-vis other professional courses and the lifetime earnings or market value for the courses seem to be very wide. The work schedules of a doctor vis-à-vis other professions are also quite different. The students, who are undergoing training in these professional courses, are now looking for jobs in lucrative sectors where opportunities in very narrow fields of specialization are emerging. Very few are now interested in government service. Therefore, there is cut-throat competition among the students to concentrate on narrow fields of specialization so as to get absorbed in jobs that provide more money and prestige. But, the academic training offered in some of the institutes is not directly related to the job

market, particularly in the private sector. Therefore, there is frustration among the young minds. This is also affecting the quality of training and the absorbing capacity of the trainees.

The academic atmosphere in some of the professional institutes is so narrow that they focus more on the job market, rather than the needs of the people and economy. It is observed that in one premier medical institute around 40 subjects are offered as specializations. But there is little space for the human sciences or discussion about the society. The subject called social and preventive medicine is not comprehensive enough to understand the dynamics of society and its implications for the profession. This is also true in the case of technology courses where there is little scope for any understanding about the society and the human relations. The increasing demand for manpower in the West has made Indian students to flock around these courses. Except in a few IITs, there is little scope for offering courses in human sciences in majority of the engineering, science and technology colleges. The students who are coming out of these institutes really need to work in real-life situations in the society and have to cope up with several social and human tensions. The students are not familiar with the situations that they face in real life and are finding it very difficult to cope with the work. Though, there is no apparent danger of cultural shock, the students from these institutes have very little exposure about our society, family, culture and related issues. Sooner or later they are finding life as routine and mechanical as no training was offered to cope with real human and social situations relating to an individual in a family and society resulting in suicides, dowry deaths, etc. This phenomenon is unfortunately attributed to inappropriate education.

It is also true that majority of the students who clamour for these courses come from urban elite families. They are not familiar with the complexities of the society, and therefore, when issues like caste, religion and other social issues are confronted,

they are confused. They do not have any experience in comprehending the issues except the knowledge in their specialized fields of study. They are found to be alienated individuals. The problems encountered in real-life situations on the job are found to be different from what they learn or understand from their narrowly structured courses. They baffle. Some of them resort to unethical practices and form into cartels to prevent others to enter the profession. There are several studies undertaken by scholars to prove this kind of a drift happening in medical profession and also in other services.

The crisis in the professional education appears to be due to another important social phenomenon of our society. Most of the professions that are now made secular were traditionally held by artisan and service castes. The modern doctors are commanding more respect than the vaidyas. Therefore, there is craving for the profession. It is also true in other secular occupations, which are appropriated by the educated elite who by and large come from the non-artisan communities during the post-colonial period. There is little scope for the artisan groups and others now to occupy the space created in modern occupations that require an academic degree. The artisans and traditional professionals have lost their occupations and are considered as ineligible to occupy the emerging modern professions, as they do not possess an academic degree. The modern curriculum is little bothered about the social relevance of the courses. There is a mismatch, leading to crisis in professional education. This is affecting the quality of professional education. In fact, Ambedkar wanted that the dalits should opt for more professional and technical education rather than arts and law courses. He started several such courses in his own institution at Milind College, Aurangabad and elsewhere.

The Future

Thus, higher educational institutes, as distinguished from coaching centres, MNC units have several responsibilities to

attend to. It is not just providing knowledge excellent and universal. It is more than this. Further, the challenges of higher education in the 21st century are not limited to meet the requirements of the country. As the system of education is now globally exposed, it has both opportunities and also limitations. We cannot think about the quality of higher education and its quantitative expansion from the perspective of the Western society and its requirements. The history of higher education in the Western society is different and the present conditions and the scope are also different from that of India. The country has sufficient unexploited resources—both material and human. The education system should be designed and expanded creatively on the basis of our own strengths to make use of these opportunities. At the same time, we can also learn from others and introduce new institutional structures to manage and enhance quality. It is appropriate to consider a National Commission of Higher Education to coordinate all the efforts as recommended by POA, 1992.

In the area of quality higher education it is necessary to identify some of our own contributions to the world of knowledge and by capitalizing on this, it is possible to expand into other areas. It is pointed out by scholars that India had a relative advantage in disciplines like mathematics, space science and technology, biotechnology, nano-technology, pharmacy, economics and several other fields. It is possible to identify and strengthen these fields of specialization with our own resources and with the help of support from outside. This will definitely help to improve the quality of education and provide opportunities to exploit unexploited resources for the development of the country. After all, quality or equity are ultimately utilized for the development of the country.

Nine

Perception of Dalit Development

It is necessary to understand the vision of Ambedkar about dalit development in the context of globalization. Further, it is possible to bring his perceptions on development at one place here as he has written books and made presentations in both the Bombay Legislative Assembly and Constituent Assembly. He has formulated policies as Labour Member in Governor General's Council that gave him an opportunity to project a vision about the future of dalits. However, it is very difficult to find a specific theory of dalit development exclusively propounded by him at one place. Except, in his detailed memorandum on the safeguards for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) being submitted to the Constituent Assembly on behalf of the SC Federation in March 1947, nowhere Ambedkar has formulated detailed programme for dalit development. It is also true that scholars and activists have focused more on the social and political contributions of Ambedkar than his economic and educational ideas. In fact,

Babasaheb Ambedkar had two PhD's in economics from two premier universities of the world in the early part of the 20th century. He was aware of the fact that economic development is essential for the survival of the dalits. But, his existential condition and the social circumstances that prevailed during the British India forced him to concentrate more on the problems of social exclusion, untouchability and made him to fight for human dignity for dalits. It does not mean that he has not written anything about the economic upliftment of the dalits in India. There are occasions on which he has clearly formulated a vision for the upliftment of the dalits in India. Some of the ideas are scattered in different parts of his writings. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the scholars to bring all of them together to bring out a vision of the great son of India for the upliftment of the poor in general and dalits in particular. I have gathered the following sources from which I have tried to put together a comprehensive vision of Ambedkar about the dalit development:

1. Philosophical background based on his books, 'Budha and Dhamma', 'Annihilation of Caste' and 'Buddha or Karl Marx'.
2. States and minorities.
3. Small holdings in India and their remedies.
4. Economic writings and his speeches delivered in the Bombay Legislative Assembly and in Parliament.

The Philosophy of Development

The theories of development and growth have appeared only during the de-colonization period, particularly with reference to the less developed countries. Development during the colonial rule was understood as emancipation from want and destitution. Dalits were considered during the 18th and 19th centuries as destitute and depressed classes. Therefore, if there is any single theory propounded by Ambedkar about the economic

emancipation of the dalits in India, it is about his ideas relating to state socialism. It has a philosophical and theoretical understanding of the fact that development according to him is possible for the dalits only through parliamentary democracy. In his paper on 'Buddha or Karl Marx' he has clearly mentioned that the route cause of 'Dukkha' in the Buddhist tradition is poverty.[1] One can remove Dukkha only through the abolition of poverty with the state's ownership of agriculture, industry and insurance. But this is to be achieved not through violence but through a peaceful means of democratic socialism in India. He has evaluated the means through which socialism can be achieved as per Marxist and Buddhist principles. On an evaluation, he has found that it is through non-violence and by following 'panchashila' and the eight-fold path of Buddhism, we can achieve equality and socialism for the Indians in general and dalits in particular. It is said that "philosophical achievement of Ambedkar consists in working on a conception of individual without being an individualist of modern western brand conception of individual, which is not in conflict with *Nairatmya Vada*. Ambedkar has interpreted Buddhism as a vibrant worldview and way of life to a whole lot of people who were systematically denied any opportunity for engaging in philosophy and religion. He made the traditional religion morally reprehensible in a society which has expected to emulate secularist values".[2] In other words, he has used Buddhist principles to blend with Marxist theory of annihilation of classes so that the dalits will remain peaceful in a new society devoid of castes and classes. In fact, his book on annihilation of caste is to be read by substituting classes in place of castes to make it more relevant in the 21st century. I think, this has remained as the backbone of his vision of dalit development.

Democracy as the Backbone of Development

Scholars like Amartya Sen are now elaborating on the need for a democratic polity to sustain development. In fact, Ambedkar was

one of the earliest to formulate a thesis that development can sustain only in a democratic set-up. He has elaborated on this point by saying that political democracy rests on four principles:

1. that the individual is an end himself;
2. that the individual has certain inalienable rights, which must be guaranteed by the Constitution;
3. that the individual shall not be required to relinquish any of his/her constitutional rights as a condition precedent to the receipt of a privilege; and
4. that the state shall not delegate powers to private persons to govern others.

In the above, Ambedkar has observed that the rights of individuals are not negotiable, much the same for the dalits. He knew that in a country like India where groups of individuals are placed in a hierarchical order and are traditionally treated as unequal, it is essential that the primacy of the value that, "all are born equal" is to be restored. It is difficult to envision development for all in India without first reinstating this universal value. That is the reason why Ambedkar was insisting on state socialism, which was to be adopted for the dalits and others in an equal footing. He has asserted that this is to be achieved through provisions in the Constitution and not through legislative process.[3] That is the reason why he wanted to become a Minister for Planning so that he could implement his development programme. But Jawaharlal Nehru did not provide him this opportunity and he made him the Chairman of Drafting Committee to draft the Constitution of India. Ambedkar has made use of the opportunity and played his historic role very well by incorporating Directive Principles of State Policy where socialism and secularism were enshrined.

Economic Development of Dalits

Ambedkar has worked for his PhD's on 'Provincial Finances in British India' and the 'Problem of the Rupee'. He has written treatises like 'Small holdings in India and their Remedies', wherein we can find an economist par excellence. But, the subjects that he dealt within his PhD dissertations are not directly related to dalit development. Therefore, no one has seriously examined the contents of those writings except the one on his contributions to Irrigation Policy and Planning by S.K. Thorat. But, it is interesting to find out from his book on the "Evaluation of Provincial Finances in British India", he maintained that there is no relation between the revenue and expenditure due to bad fiscal policy of the British.[4] Ambedkar has vehemently criticized the British Indian government in his thesis like that of Dada Bhai Nauroji who proved that the draining of the Indian economy had taken place through excessive taxation. He has provided the data to show that the ratio of total land revenue to total revenue during the period 1772 to 1855 has remained at 54 per cent, while the customs income has remained around 6 per cent. Ambedkar has commented that justice in taxation was conspicuous by its absence. He has observed that, "it was a cruel satire that the many European civil servants who fattened themselves on pay and pickings were supremely exempted from any contribution towards maintenance of the government".[5] He has also indicated in his dissertations that the most oppressive tax at that time was salt tax, which remained at 11 to 14 per cent of the revenue during the same period. Those scholars who have attributed greatest significance to Gandhiji's struggle against salt tax hardly mention about Ambedkar's criticism of British on this important issue. He has explained how the income was not spent on the development of the people. He found that around 60 per cent of the income was spent on military during the period 1809 to 1850. This, according to Ambedkar, was an imperial system which has drained the Indian economy. Therefore, he wanted that India

should have a federal structure, where taxes should be based on rational principles. If, one is inclined to formulate a theory of development as developed by Ambedkar in his writings, this can be considered as the background on which one can develop his other writings such as making the agriculture sector productive.

Making Agriculture a Productive Sector

Ambedkar is one of the earliest to formulate a theory of economic holdings in India. One significant aspect of Ambedkar's scholarship is that he is one of the few who has related the social economy, which is based on caste, with the real material economy. In an article, published in the *Journal of the Indian Economic Society* in 1918, Ambedkar has pointed out that the diminutive area of holdings is harmful to agriculture. He has further examined the problems of agricultural economy such as the size of the holdings, the tenure and the productivity. In order to develop a theoretical background under which holdings can be considered as economic holding, he has collected data from the committees appointed by Baroda State under H.S. Jevons and also the data collected by G.F. Keatings.[6] On the basis of these data Dr. Ambedkar has proved that the agricultural economy is suffering due to fragmentation of holdings. He criticized Keatings for his analysis of consolidation of holdings as a remedy to uneconomic holding. He is also critical about Jevons' view of an economic holding. Jevons has analysed that a piece of land that is sufficient to keep a family fully engaged and support it with the output will be considered as an economic unit. Ambedkar says that here lies the error "for consumption is not the correct standard by which to judge the character of holdings. It would be perverse accounting to condemn a farm as not paying because its total output does not support the family of the farmer, though as pro-rata return for each of his investments, it is the highest.... It follows then, that if the relation between out turn and investments is a true economic

relation, we can only speak of a farm as economic, i.e., paying in the sense of production and not in the sense of consumption.... It is the right or wrong proportion of other factors of production to a unit of land that renders the latter economic or uneconomic".[7] Therefore, Ambedkar said that, "consequently the remedy for the ills of agriculture does not lie primarily in the matter of enlarging holdings but in the matter of increasing capital and capital goods. The capital arises from savings and that saving is possible where there is surplus is a common place of political economy".[8] Elaborating further on this, Ambedkar finds that the evil of fragmentation of holdings lies in the social economy, which is based on tradition. He cites the law of primogeniture for inheritance of land wherein the holdings are divided among the siblings resulting in fragmentation. The reason for this, according to Ambedkar, is the Hindu social order, which is responsible for those people who demand for a piece of land as it is the only profitable thing for them to cultivate at present. Therefore, Ambedkar recommends that in order to make a holding as economic or viable holding, it is to be seen that in what proportion other factors of production, such as agricultural inputs, are to be taken into consideration in making the unit of land, however small it may be, an economic holding. In his memorandum on 'States and Minorities', Ambedkar has again repeated the same in the case of nationalized land which will be distributed among the people along with sufficient inputs to make their units economic and viable.[9] Perhaps, Ambedkar was the first before Arthur Lewis, the noble laureate to say that development is possible in a labour surplus economy by industrializing the economy using the surplus agriculture labour. Here, he says, "thus small and scattered holdings are the ills from which our agriculture is suffering, to cure it of them is undeniably to industrialize". He has also mentioned here that de-urbanization has taken place in India and is swelling the volume of rural population beyond need. He said that "the earlier we stem this ominous tide, the better". It means

that he was anticipating the theory of economic growth with unlimited supplies of labour as advocated by Arthur Lewis.

However, Ambedkar was not really interested in the agricultural economy alone as indicated by him in the same article which ends with the quotation from Sir Arthur Cotton, "there is danger of too much agriculture in India".[10] It is now clear that Ambedkar was one of the greatest economists of the early part of the 20th century who analysed the ills of the Indian economy and suggested measures to overcome the problems of underdevelopment in an agrarian economy where the dalits did also suffer from low agricultural productivity along with others. The remedy seems to be indirectly hinted by Ambedkar by saying that dalits should be provided with opportunities in public sector and in services (more details are given in the next chapter). It is a known fact that the entry into public sector presupposes sufficient education.

Protection against Economic Exploitation

The profound wisdom of Ambedkar relating to economic upliftment of the dalits could be seen in his memorandum on 'States and Minorities'. In Article II, Section 2 on remedies against invasion of fundamental rights, Ambedkar has provided provisions for protection against economic exploitation. It means that Ambedkar wanted state socialism by means of constitutional remedy against economic exploitation for dalits. The following text from his memorandum on 'States and Minorities' clearly indicates what he wanted to provide for the economic development of dalits.[11]

1. That industries which are key industries or which may be declared to be key industries shall be owned and run by the state.
2. That industries which are not key industries but which are basic industries shall be owned by the state and shall be run by the state or by corporations established by the state.

3. That insurance shall be a monopoly of the state and that the state shall compel every adult citizen to take out a life insurance policy commensurate with his wages as may be prescribed by the legislature.
4. That agriculture shall be state industry.
5. That state shall acquire the subsisting rights in such industries, insurance and agricultural land held by private individuals, whether as owners, tenants or mortgages and pay them compensation in the form of debenture equal to the value of his or her right in the land. Provided that in reckoning the value of land, plant or security no account shall be taken of any rise therein due to emergency, or any potential or unearned value or any value for compulsory acquisition.
6. The state shall determine how and when the debenture holder shall be entitled to claim cash payment.
7. The debenture shall be transferable and inheritable property but neither the debenture holder nor the transferee from the original holder nor his heir shall be entitled to claim the return of the land or interest in any industrial concern acquired by the state or be entitled to deal with it in any way.
8. The debenture-holder shall be entitled to interest on his debentures at such rate as may be defined by law, to be paid by the state in cash or in kind as the state may deem fit.
9. Agricultural industry shall be organized on the following basis:
   (i) The state shall divide the land acquired into farms of standard size and let out the farms for cultivation to residents of the village as tenants (made up of group of families) to cultivate on the following conditions:
   (a) The farm shall be cultivated as a collective farm;
   (b) The farm shall be cultivated in accordance with rules and directions issued by government; and

(c) The tenants shall share among themselves in the manner prescribed the produce of the farm left after the payment of charges properly livable on the farm;

(ii) The land shall be let out to villagers without distinction of caste or creed and in such manner that there will be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourer;

(iii) It shall be the obligation of the state to finance the cultivation of the collective farms by the supply of water, draft animals, implements, manure, seeds, etc.;

(iv) The state shall be entitled to:

(a) to levy the following charges on the produce of the farm: (i) a portion for land revenue; (ii) a portion to pay the debenture-holders; and (iii) a portion to pay for the use of capital goods supplied; and

(b) to prescribe penalties against tenants who break the conditions of tenancy or willfully neglect to make the best use of the means of cultivation offered by the state or otherwise act prejudicially to the scheme of collective farming;

10. The scheme shall be brought into operation as early as possible but in no case shall the period extend beyond the tenth year for the date of the Constitution coming into operation.

The main purpose behind the clause (protection against economic exploitation) is to put an obligation on the state to plan the economic life of the people on lines which would lead to the highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise, and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth. The plan set out in the clause proposes state ownership in agriculture with a collectivized method of cultivation and a modified form of state socialism in the field of industry. It places squarely on the shoulders of the state the obligation to supply capital necessary for agriculture as well as for industry. Without

the supply of capital by the state neither land nor industry can be made to yield better results. It also proposes to nationalize insurance with a double objective. Nationalized insurance gives the individual greater security that a private insurance firm does in a much as it pledges the resources of the state as a security for the ultimate payment of his insurance money to the market at a high rate of interest. State socialism is essential for the rapid industrialization of India. Private enterprise cannot do it and if it did it would produce those inequalities of wealth, which private capitalism has produced in Europe and which should be a warning to Indians. Consolidation of holdings and tenancy legislations are worse than useless. They cannot bring about prosperity in agriculture. Nor can be they of any help to 60 million untouchables, who are just landless labourers. Only collective farms on the lines set out in the proposal can help them. There is no expropriation of the interests concerned. Consequently, there ought to be no objection to the proposal on that account.

The plan has two special features. One is that it proposes state socialism in important fields of economic life. The second special feature of the plan is that it does not leave the establishment of state socialism to the will of the legislature. It establishes state socialism by the law of the Constitution and thus makes it unalterable by any act of the legislature and the executive.

Students of constitutional law will at once raise a protest. They are sure to ask: Does not the proposal go beyond the scope of the usual type of fundamental rights? My answer is that it does not. If it appears to go beyond it, it is only because the conception of fundamental rights on which such criticism is based is a narrow conception. One may go further and say that even from the narrow conception of the scope of the constitutional law as comprising no more than fundamental rights the proposal can find ample justification. For what is the purpose of prescribing by law the shape and form of the economic structure of society? The

purpose is to protect the liberty of the individual from invasion by other individuals, which is the object of enacting fundamental rights. The connection between individual liberties and the shape and form of the economic structure of society may not be apparent to everyone. Nonetheless, the connection between the two is real.

It is thus clear from the above that the economic protection for dalits lies with state socialism. If we confine these writings with his later publications such as 'Buddha and Karl Marx', 'Buddha and his Dhamma' (Saddamma), etc., the vision of dalit development in terms of spiritual and materialistic implications will be clear. Unfortunately, most of his followers take the ritualistic aspects of his dhamma or vision without the spiritual substance. However, activist scholars like Anand Teltumbde pointed out that the Ambedkar was never serious about mass struggles for land. It was even pointed out by Anand that whenever activists like Gaikwad took up the cause, he was branded as a communist indicating the weaknesses in the movement.

The Future of Dalits

Ambedkar never wanted that the dalits should remain in the scattered settlements of the villages. He was against the proposal to make the village as a unit of governance while Gandhiji romanticized the village. In his Constituent Assembly debates, Ambedkar gave a strong reply to his critics who were very critical about him in not making the village as a unit of governance in the Constitution. In his reply, Ambedkar said that "what is a village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance and narrow mindedness". What a profound vision that Ambedkar had about the position of dalits in India which is not different now from what he has described about the village about 60 years ago. Though he wanted the expansion of the public sector and creation of

opportunities for dalits in the services, it is lamented that the opportunities for the dalits after 1991 Economic Policy have dwindled.

It is instructive to look at the proposal of industrialization which Ambedkar has mentioned in his 'States and Minorities' here. It is good to find that the language and the tenor of his argument for an industrial policy, which is based on the development of public sector in key and basic industries, became a part of industrial policy of the Congress government in 1948. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 is almost the same as that of Ambedkar's proposal in his memorandum. It is this policy that had made the country a strong economy and the rate of growth of the economy during the operation of the policy before 1980 was around 5 per cent. The dalits were anticipating a lot of opportunities in the public sector consisting of agriculture and manufacturing sectors. After the introduction of the industrial policy in 1948, the Congress government eulogized it as *sine-quo-non* of socialism in their resolution at Avadi Congress in 1956 (see more details in next chapter). This was a policy to translate some of the provisions in the Directive Principles of State Policy which Ambedkar so labouriously developed and incorporated in the Constitution. This is all shattered now. There is no leader like Ambedkar now to argue and negotiate for the upliftment of dalits in the 21st century. However, there is a hope that the small section of the dalits who are transforming themselves as organic intellectuals can draw abundantly from the writings of Babasaheb to fight for a casteless and egalitarian society in future.

Notes

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2. S.G. Kulakarni, "Philosophy of Ambedkar: Some Observations" in K.S. Chalam (ed.) *Relevance of Ambedkarism in India,* Rawat, 1993.
3. Vasant Moon, op. cit., Chapter on States and Minorities.
4. Ibid., Vol. 6.
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6. Ibid., Vol. 1.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., *States and Minorities*, last sentence.
11. Ibid.

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Ten

Relevance of Public Sector for Modernization

Public sector, as an integral part of the state and as an institution, had been in existence ever since an organized state apparatus came into reality. Kautilya has devoted a considerable part of his treatise, *Arthasastra* explaining the duties and functions of the heads of various public sector units like Sutradhyaksha, Superintendent of Textiles, etc.[1] In Pharonic Egypt, the granary and temple estates administration were considered as important wings of state administration.[2] Imperial China established salt and alcohol monopolies in the first century B.C.[3] However, it is very difficult for people from the Anglo-Saxon countries to conceive of public enterprises as parts of state where these institutions came into being through acquisition of firms, which were under private ownership. Since the experts who are theorizing on privatization have come mostly from these countries or have studied and influenced by these theories, they fail to comprehend the historical and cultural significance of public enterprises in the

non-Anglo-Saxon countries. In fact, Ambedkar argued for the development of public sector to modernize the economy that provides opportunities for dalits in the emerging sector.

We have used here the terms 'public sector' and 'public enterprise' as synonymous. In fact, they are not the same.

Table 1

Public Sector Patterns in India and Japan

Indian Model	*Japanese Model*
1. The public sector is given a permanent place in the economy and its rate of growth is to be higher than that of the private sector, to achieve progressively a situation of predominance of the public sector in the whole economy.	1. The public sector is to have a permanent place only in as much as it covers 'social overheads' in the field of public utilities and assists in the development of private industries—considered as alternatives to the state entering the field of industrial production.
2. Certain strategic branches of production are reserved for the state, and in these branches, the predominance of the public sector is to be achieved as soon as possible.	2. The state may start new industrial ventures but their privatization is foreseen as soon as they become profitable.
3. As a result of (1) and (2), the development of private monopoly capital will be restricted or at least slowed down.	3. The state pursues a policy of the conscious formation and strengthening of the capitalist class and thus facilitates the formation of monopoly groups.
4. Planned industrialization with the public sector as its main support, and public utility and raw material industries as its main concern, is launched to lay the basis for a self-sustaining growth of the economy and to strengthen the economic independence of the country.	4. Since the domestic capitalist class is weak, an 'open-door' policy towards foreign capital is pursued.
5. Comprehensive planning—not only financial but also physical— assumes growing importance.	5. Planning remains embryonic and is generally confined to 'programming', based almost exclusively on financial considerations.

Source: Adapted from Sachs, I., *Patterns of Public Sector in Underdeveloped Economies,* Asia, London, 1964, pp.79–80.

Ramanatham has remarked that the public enterprises have two faces: one, a governmental face where they are owned by the state to serve public; and two, an enterprise face in which they are expected to be business like in their operations.[4] In addition to the public enterprises, public sector has two more categories of institutions known as departmental enterprises as parastatal units to provide essential services to the public, and public holding companies to provide necessary finances to the enterprises. All of them are called as public sector units. Some of them have emerged as natural growth enterprises and some by acquisition by the state. Table 1 indicates the pattern of public sector in India and Japan showing how they have emerged over a period of time to serve different purposes.

In this context, we need to understand the state as a collective will of the people. It has an obligation to plan the economic life of people. According to Hanson, the state should initiate industrial development in underdeveloped economies where private initiative is inadequate and capital shortage is extensive.[5] It is here Ambedkar added a new dimension to the role of the state. In his memorandum to the Constituent Assembly on 'States and Minorities', he argued that the state has a responsibility to protect the individual against invasion of fundamental rights.[6] In the clause on protection against economic exploitation explained in the explanatory notes of the memorandum, he used the language of rights that we generally come across today in social science discourse.[7] It is significant to note that Ambedkar wanted the establishment of public enterprises to fulfil the objective of economic protection against exploitation.

Ambedkar and the Public Sector

Though Ambedkar submitted the memorandum on behalf of the Scheduled Castes Federation, he argued for the protection of

every citizen against economic exploitation and not for the dalits alone. He has elaborated the remedies against the invasion of fundamental rights under four clauses, as (1) judicial protection, (2) protection against unequal treatment, (3) protection against discrimination, and (4) protection against economic exploitation. Here, clause 4 is found to be relevant as he was arguing for remedies to protect the citizen through the prescription of state socialism by the law of the Constitution so that it will be beyond the reach of the parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it. Thus, Ambedkar was so convinced of the need for state socialism for the amelioration of the poor and wanted it to achieve it through the constitutional law. But, he could not do so when he was made the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, except that he could incorporate directive principles of state policy and particularly Articles 38 and 39, that speak of the mild form of state socialism. He has formulated the industrial policy consisting of public sector units both in industry and in agriculture.[8] The details of the policy as enunciated by Ambedkar are given in Chapter 5. Scholars have started arguing for public sector as Ambedkar's paradigm in recent times when the question of reservations in private sector was raised by dalit activists. It is pointed out by dalit activists that the anti-poverty programmes of government and the creation of a dalit intellectual group, etc., are possible only with the continuation of public sector. This is perhaps what Ambedkar has also anticipated in arguing for a public sector in his memorandum.

Pre-Independence Debate on Public Sector

It was not only Ambedkar who has systematically argued in favour of the public sector, there were several nationalist leaders and industrialists also who have made proposals for the intervention of the state in industrial development. The popular Bombay Plan of 1944 prepared by industrialists, Purshotam Das Thakur Das,

J.R.D. Tata, G.D. Birla and five others advocated for state intervention in planning, financing and management of industrial development.[9] It was indicated in their document on planning that the main objective of industrial development through state intervention was to double the per capita income of Indians. They wanted that the state should promote production of power, capital goods and the establishment of cottage industries to produce consumer goods. Another significant argument for the state support in matters of industrial development came from "People's Plan" developed by B.N. Banerjee, V.M. Tarakunde and others in 1946.[10] They were very emphatic in saying that economic development is not possible with private ownership and wanted the independent India to emulate Soviet system of planning to reduce poverty. They have further explained that being the realistic appreciations of the situation, "industrialization including mechanization of agriculture will have to be financed by the state. Industries are to be built or expanded with the help of the public funds which will naturally have to be under the control of the state".[11] In fact, Jawahar Lal Nehru in the Congress Working Committee at its meeting at Wardha, adopted a resolution recommending a scheme of national reconstruction and social planning with clearly defined social objective. In 1938, Subhash Chandra Bose, in his presidential address at the Haripura Congress, declared a comprehensive scheme for gradually socializing our entire agricultural and industrial system in the sphere of both production and appropriation.[12] Nehru, according to Partha Chatterjee, has intervened in the discussion about modern large-scale industries versus cottage industries debate and declared that the large-scale industries are to be promoted as long as they did not come into conflict with cottage industries.[13] It is interesting to find that both the nationalist leaders and Ambedkar were devising a development ideology for a post-colonial state. According to experts like Partha Chatterjee, "state was connected to the people-nation not simply through the

procedural forms of representative government; it also acquired its representativeness by directing a programme of economic development on behalf of the nation. The former connected, as in any liberal form of government and legal political sovereignty of the State with the sovereignty of the people. The latter connected the sovereignty powers of the state directly with the economic well-being of the people". Thus, it is clear that both Nehru and Ambedkar were in agreement on the intervention of the state for the development of the public sector in independent India.

Emergence of Public Sector in Post-Independence Period

We have seen in the above discussion that the articulation for an active role of the state in the economic development of the country formed a part of the struggle against colonial powers so that an independent India could adopt its own strategy of development. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the chief architect of economic planning, seemed to have been influenced by the ideological debates for nationalization of industries in Great Britain. The Labour Party of Great Britain had adopted an industrial policy around 1945,[14] which had a significant impact on both Ambedkar and Jawahar Lal Nehru as each one of them has pursued the same industrial policy with diverse elucidations. It is instructive to look at the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 adopted by the Nehru government, which was looking similar to the policy suggested by Ambedkar in his memorandum to the Constituent Assembly on "States and Minorities". The Congress Party has adopted a special resolution in its Avadi session in 1953 accepting socialism as a part of the state policy. In order to implement the socialist ideals, they have even redrafted the 1956 industrial policy, which reflected the vision of Nehru to achieve an egalitarian society through the expansion of the public sector. In this context, both Nehru and Ambedkar are found to be in total agreement for the

continuation of public sector, as reflected in the industrial policy of 1956. It was made very clear that the state would take the major responsibility of the development of Schedule 'A' industries consisting of defence, railways, etc., and Schedule 'B' comprising 12 categories, such as minerals, fertilizers, etc., where the state will own and initiate for their development but at the same time private enterprises will also supplement the state effort. The rest of industries are left to the private sector initiative. The pre-eminent role accorded to the public sector by Nehru was designed to occupy the 'commanding heights' of the economy. The same policy has continued with little modifications like introduction of licensing system, amendments to Company Act, etc., till 1980. Thereafter, several changes and modifications were introduced in 1991, after which, it was totally abandoned. It is necessary at this stage to reflect on the achievements of the public sector during the last six decades of its existence in the Indian economy before we examine its performance in the next section.

The 'Invisible Foot' of Public Sector

It is generally conceived that the industrial policy, pursued by the Government of India from 1948 to 1990, was responsible in creating opportunities for the poor and the deprived sections of the society. It is, however, alleged that the same policies have created several inconsistencies and incapacities in the system. It is because of this phenomenon, some economists like Jagdish Bhagwati argued that the 'invisible foot' of state is seen everywhere leading to unproductive and wasteful public expenditure. It is only to do away with the role of the state in promoting a rent-seeking class through the so-called licences and permits and also quotas, a group of economists, who are called neo-liberals, have advocated the introduction of market in place of the state. The neo-liberals have further argued that the self-interest of individuals and groups do come in the way of

economic decision-making, making these decisions irrational. These interest groups are generally promoted in the control and command systems like India. It is necessary, therefore, to free the system from these controls. The only way to do it is through the reduction of the role of the state and introduction of market in its place. Market, according to the neo-liberals, brings efficiency and productivity, which India was lacking in 1990 as its rate of growth was less than 5 per cent. Therefore, the 'invisible foot' experts argued for the limited role of the state in economic matters. The influence of the neo-liberals was so formidable that India, along with some other developing countries, was prompted by the World Bank and IMF to pursue these policies from 1991.

It is necessary to reflect on the achievements of this new economic policy, which has reduced the role of the state in economic activities and thus affected the role of the public sector. The studies undertaken by experts, particularly the political economists like Pranab Bardhan,[15] R.S. Jenkins,[16] Francine Frankel,[17] Atul Kohli,[18] and others, need our attention. The allegation that the licence-permit raj was responsible for the underdevelopment of productive forces and for the emergence of a rent-seeking class is not entirely borne out of the facts. It is, however, found that the licence-permit raj was deliberately promoted by the dominant industrial capitalist class, which was very active just before independence. In fact, Pranab Bardhan[19] argued that the dominant class has supported the "government's policy of import-substituting industrialization, quantitative trade restrictions, providing automatically protected domestic markets and of running a large public sector providing capital goods, intermediate products and infrastructure facilities for private industry often at an artificially low price". It was reported by R.K. Hazari that the private industrial houses blockaded new entrants into the system. The finding was supported by the empirical evidence gathered by the Submol Dutt Committee in 1967.[20] The Committee came to the conclusion that 73 big business houses

controlled 55 per cent of programmed investment, and 60 per cent of imported capital goods. They have made inroads into certain areas, which were originally reserved for public sector. Therefore, Bardhan felt that "the controlling interest of the public financial institutions in companies has been used more often to take over 'sick' or marginal units saddled with large loss. Thus, the government not merely finances private industry, it also acts as the risk-absorber of the last resort and a charitable hospital where the private sector can dump its 'sick' units". It is interesting to find that the neo-liberals who are now advocating a limited role for the state have themselves argued for the active participation of the state in the process of development planning in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is very difficult to comprehend from the studies of neo-liberals how the evolution of the industrial policy has supported the rent-seeking class as an independent class. The industrial class and the rent-seekers are not independent of each other. There is evidence from the studies of Bardhan and others that there is a nexus between the dominant class, bureaucrats and the political elite in formulating policies for the advantage of the proprietary class. There is little evidence as of now to show that liberalization and privatization of public sector have reduced the nexus between these classes and have emerged as autonomous in the post-liberalization period. Thus, those who lamented for the loss of welfare due to the operation of the interest groups, seem to have failed to explain why the same groups are active even after liberalization and constitute an inherent part of the state. Is it possible to understand the post-disinvestments developments by applying the neo-liberal framework of analysis? Do we need a different set of tools for analysis of radical political economy?

It is reported by Pranab Bardhan that, "some of the new entrepreneurs, belonging as they do to the families of senior bureaucrats, army officers and other members of the professional class or sharing ties through education in elite engineering and

business schools have forced new links between the bureaucracy and private capital".[21] It is the dominant proprietary class, which has accumulated ill-gotten wealth and extracted surpluses from the economy through unaccounted incomes and deposited them in tax havens outside India. It is argued that it is these dominant interest groups who really wanted a policy that would enable them to bring back the money into the country. Apart from the so-called benefits of technology transfer, economic efficiency, etc., of liberalization, much of the FDI investments, it is alleged, seem to have come from this class through a different route. In order to substantiate this argument, the countrywise FDI inflows into India are presented in Table 2. The data show that around 40 per cent of the FDI flows come from a small and tiny country like Mauritius (whose GDP is only $16 billion but invested $11 billion) and another 20 per cent from the US and the UK indicating some unusual movement of capital during the post-liberalization period. There are occasional media reports that money laundering has been taking place in the name of IT and other remittances in recent years. It was reported in the *Times of India* on 22nd April 2007, that money laundering through a shut foreign bank under the cover of software operations from Bangalore to the extent of Rs. 820 crore per week took place just before it was busted by authorities in the UK. The total amount of transfers reported to be $9 billion in a space of few months.

In Table 2, it is also reported that an amount of $30,452 million was supposed to have entered the country through FDI route. We have discussed these details here to show that the so-called inefficiency and loss of welfare alleged to have been taken place during the licence-permit raj is not actually a loss. If one is inclined to agree that the system has sufficiently created a dominant class with the unaccounted funds to turn out to be good investors and entrepreneurs to run the post-liberalization economy, then, it is again. Therefore, the argument that the invisible foot of state was responsible for rent-seekers and for the

Table 2

Countrywise FDI Inflows from August 1991 to December 2005

(US $ million)

Ranks	*Sector*	*Amount of FDI inflows*	*%age of total inflows*
1.	Mauritius	11,115.47	37.25
2.	USA	4,912.75	15.80
3.	Japan	2,059.33	6.79
4.	The Netherlands	1,987.18	6.65
5.	UK	1,911.77	6.25
6.	Germany	1,338.88	4.27
7.	Singapore	962.41	3.14
8.	France	772.99	2.55
9.	South Korea	748.98	2.28
10.	Switzerland	613.58	1.98
11.	Italy	485.74	1.58
12.	Sweden	471.99	1.56
13.	Hongkong	366.11	1.05
14.	Australia	154.79	0.51
15.	Denmark	156.49	0.51
16.	UAE	140.95	0.50
17.	Belgium	142.41	0.46
18.	Malaysia	135.82	0.46
19.	Cyprus	117.47	0.40
20.	Russia	116.33	0.39
21.	Cayman Island	103.46	0.37
22.	Canada	105.39	0.35
23.	British Virginia	81.42	0.28
24.	Bermuda	70.51	0.23
25.	Thailand	74.73	0.22
26.	Philippines	52.35	0.15
27.	Finland	43.25	0.14
28.	Luxembourg	41.05	0.14
29.	Israel	43.71	0.13
30.	Austria	39.62	0.13
31.	Spain	32.16	0.11
32.	NRI	310.98	0.96
33.	Other 72 countries	785.72	2.86
	Total	30,452.54	100.00

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Commerce, FDI Cell.

Hindus the rate of growth is not borne out of empirical reality. The fact of-the-matter is that the dominant classes remain the same old proprietary classes running the state irrespective of the political party in power. The belief of the neo-liberals that the state remains autonomous is an illusion. It is the dominant classes who constitute the major component of the state today and they actively participate in the political process of parliamentary democracy in India. Do they remain neutral or favour the industries or interests that they represent is yet to be disproved?

Privatization of Public Sector

The collapse of the Soviet Union has strengthened the ideological pressure on the theme that everywhere states are ineffective in running economies. Though the fact of the matter is quite contrary to the notorious movement against the state, the mainstream economic theory supported by public choice theory, principal agent theory, transaction analysis, new institutional economics, etc. have popularized that private enterprises are more efficient than the public sector. It is quite often conveniently camouflaged in such discussions how the Soviet Union and the CIS economies could be rebuilt within a decade? Is it due to the fact that the erstwhile system has sufficiently created wealth but failed to manage it because of party bureaucracy? The World Bank, in its 1997 development report, changed its tone and emphasized on the effective role of the state in a changing world. It has given case studies to show how in different countries, the state sector has played an important role in revitalizing the economy and in restoring the market for an effective engagement with development. It is said that "development—economic, social and sustainable—without an effective state is impossible. It is increasingly recognized that an effective state—not a minimalist one—is central to economic and social development but more as partner and facilitator than as director".[22]

It is described that the experiences of the Asian Tigers are not unique as each country has its own story. For instance, Singapore has used interventionist policies in developing *entrepot* trading and ship servicing. It has limited the TNCs to establish R&D units. Quite contrary to the popular opinion on public sector in Asia, Singapore has set up public enterprises to undertake activities where foreign investment was unfeasible or undesirable.[23] Similarly, Korea and Taiwan adopted state interventionist policies without exposing the domestic market to free trade with tariff and quantity measures. Korea has used a high-risk strategy of providing more access to international technical markets with detailed targeting of technology and products. The national resources are protected to give a competitive edge to the domestic units called 'chaebol'. This has increased the local capabilities of the units. However, all these strategies are pursued within the framework of market. It has been emphasized that the effective functioning of market is possible through private enterprises.

Each country has followed its own method of privatization depending upon its requirements and strategy. One must remember here that privatization is possible where there is a public sector. The following are some of the methods through which privatization has been undertaken:

1. *Trade sale:* It takes place in the form of selling an enterprise to an existing firm active in the industry.
2. *Public offering:* Initial public offering (IPO) or public float is another method of selling shares of the enterprise on stock market to produce a diverse ownership structure.
3. *The management buyout:* The managers of an enterprise form themselves into a company so as to purchase the enterprise from the state. It is reported that some British and Australian companies have followed this method.
4. *IPO plus scheme:* In this method, private interests are alleged to establish special investment funds to buy the shares of

enterprises being privatized in the first instance and then issue their own participation shares to the public.

5. *The debt-for-equity scheme:* The creditors of the enterprise accept equity in heavily debt-laden enterprises in exchange for discharging debt burden. This is being used mostly in Latin American countries.
6. *Public-private partnership:* In this, some parts of the enterprises are diverted to create public-private mix by inviting private partnership.
7. *Management contract:* Saudi Arabia has introduced this method wherein the ownership of the ports remained with the government, but enlisted the support of private companies to operate individual port facilities under management contracts.
8. *Equalization:* This method is being followed in the communist countries of China and Vietnam where the government has slowly mixed ownership without downsizing public sector units. In the town and village units, shares are sold to private enterprises without specifying the maturity of ownership.

Thus, several methods seem to have been used to privatize public enterprises. But, in each method, there is a systematic strategy and plan, according to Wittenhall, "to benefit the institutional investors, the executives of privatized companies, the stock exchanges, the experts associated with consultancy firms on privatization and the merchant bankers, while the common low income citizens are the main losers".[24] Ikenberrey (1990), in his study on "The International Spread of Privatisation Policies", described the anti-public enterprise conditionalities imposed by the USA in its own aid and the privatization clauses employed by World Bank for its loans as, "policy bandwagoning". These policies are generally bolstered through the commissioned

propaganda in the media, occasionally employing cross-border intellectual inputs from the academia.

The story of privatization in India is different from other countries. But, the script is the same, the title given here is 'disinvestments'. A separate Ministry of Disinvestments was created and later abandoned and only a Department of Disinvestments has been kept in the Ministry of Finance. However, it is alleged, there is no plan or strategy to privatize the public enterprises. In the beginning (1991–92), it was decided to disinvest up to 20 per cent of government equity in public sector units. The Rangarajan Committee, in 1993, recommended disinvestments up to 49 per cent of the government equity in five important sectors such as coal, mineral oils, atomic energy, defence equipment and railway transport. Accordingly, the ad hocism adopted in the policy of disinvestments in India was broadly streamlined into four methods as follows:

1. involving a change of ownership through a strategic sale of the enterprise;
2. involving no change in the ownership of the enterprise, but the shares of the enterprise will be offered for sale;
3. involving a decision to sell the assets of the enterprise to shut it down permanently; and
4. no disinvestments in the sale of the enterprise or offer of sale of the shares of the enterprise.

All the above methods of disinvestments from the year 1991–92 yielded an amount of Rs. 47,832 crore during 1992–93 to 2004–05. The government has decided to establish a Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) to advice on ways and means for strengthening them in general and to make them more autonomous and professional. The government has also approved a separate National Investment Fund with proceeds from disinvestments of public sector units. Its broad objective is to

make investment in selected profitable or revivable units that yield adequate returns. In fact, the radical change in the attitude of the government in the area of disinvestments was due to two important events. One, the National Common Minimum Programme agreed on a transparent and consultative mechanism in all efforts of privatization by the government. Two, the profitability and turnaround achieved by many public sector units and their continuous positive contribution to budgetary resources made the policy makers to backtrack their efforts. We have presented the case study of turn around achieved by Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in the appendix.

Performance of Public Sector in India

The performance of a public sector unit is assessed in terms of several indicators. In addition to the traditional rate of return studies, which are generally used to assess the profitability of an enterprise, public or private, international rating agencies are now using several ratios to indicate whether a particular business unit is desirable or not. In Table 3, the profitability of central public sector undertakings in terms of some accounting ratios is provided. There were 87 units in 1970–71 which have reached the maximum number of 241 in 1995–96 but the number has declined thereafter. The paid-up capital was Rs. 1,820 crore in 1970–71, which reached an amount of Rs. 82,400 crore in 1999–2000. It is very interesting to find that the net worth which was Rs. 2,200 crore in 1970–71, increased to Rs. 75,730 crore in 1990–91 recording a growth of 34 times in a period of 20 years. It has substantially increased to Rs. 412,737 crore by 2005–06. The gross profits of the units were estimated at Rs. 150 crore in 1970–71, which have reached a whopping Rs. 141,951 crore in 2005–06. The profit after tax to networth ratio, an important financial ratio, is found to be 17 per cent in 2005–06. It is much higher than the RBI short-term landing rate. Except a dozen

public sector units, which were originally sick units being nationalized, all the central public sector units are now making profits. The foreign exchange earnings of some of the units are found to be very crucial for the economy. A recent study on the public sector performance since 1950 by R. Nag Raj[25] has concluded that the units have not only improved their physical efficiency but also increased their profitability during a period of six decades of their existence. The study has made use of the National Accounts Statistics and other secondary data to arrive at the conclusion that, "the public sector's share rose steadily from about 9 per cent of the domestic output in 1960–61 to about 25 per cent by the mid-1980s, remaining roughly constant thereafter. But, the sector's share in domestic investment got reduced by half after the mid-1980s... the finding is consistent with the decline in the average capital output ratio in public sector, a result that is also true for many one-digit sectors of the economy.... It suggests that much of the pre-occupation of current policy of changing public ownership and control to get greater efficiency seems misplaced".[26] The study has brought out a very significant factor that was found responsible for the alleged low financial performance of the public sector units. Nag Raj further explains that, "over the last 40 years, public sector prices never exceeded the overall price level and in 2003–04, the relative price stood just 83 per cent of what it was in 1960–61. In other words, public sector prices have risen at a slower rate than the overall prices in the economy over the long run, adversely affecting its financial position".

We may recall here the objectives and goals for which public sector was recommended by our nationalist leaders including Ambedkar. They were anticipating that the public sector would provide sufficient employment opportunities, implement reasonable wage structure, provide R&D, become a model employer and so on. But, the study by Nag Raj has proved that there was a decline in employment growth, a sustained rise of

plant load factor of thermal power generation, etc., that turned out to be negative indicators which affect future prospects of public sector. At the same time, the public sector has achieved some of the goals set by our planners who wanted it to be the harbinger of industrial development. It has succeeded in creating the necessary infrastructure, the critical minimum effort in the form of skilled and trained manpower in sectors like BHEL, ONGC, satellite communication, etc., that have really attracted the private foreign investments into the country. But, the quality of FDI in terms of knowledge spillovers to the host country is low compared to the contributions of public sector in select areas. It is reported in a study that, "the quality of FDI in India in terms of local R&D is remarkably low. One-half of foreign firms in as many as eight industries from a total of 14 industries do not do any local R&D activities".[27] In other words, public sector has remained to be a predominant activity of the state in terms of providing budgetary resources, provision of 'bottom-line' capabilities even to attract FDI, maintenance of consumers' surplus with relatively low prices for its products and services, etc. These positive signals need to be taken in the right direction to restore the public sector to its original mandate of taking up the 'commanding heights' of the economy. It is necessary at this stage to look at the tools of analysis employed by some experts in making the public sector a scapegoat.

In most of the studies on performance of public sector units, financial ratios such as profit before interest, tax and EP (PBITEP), dividend payout, etc., are considered and compared with private enterprises. It is interesting to note that the performance of the public sector in terms of these ratios is also very impressive. It is estimated in the survey of Public Enterprises Report, 2004–2005 that the PBITEP to capital employed was found to be 23.1 per cent in 1995–96 and there was a decline in the year 2000–01 to 20.9 per cent which later picked up reaching 28.25 per cent in 2004–05. Again, these ratios are calculated on the basis of the

given book value of the assets, which is very lopsided. It was pointed out by the Principal Directorate of Audit, in its report of 2006, that, "the Central Public Sector Enterprises disinvested were in the possession of substantial real estates, these properties were not *valued properly* (emphasis added) as per the market".[28] It is noted that some of the companies do not even maintain proper registers of fixed assets. This remark by the Directorate of Audit is very significant in terms of the evaluation of the profitability of the public sector units. Further, the estimates of the total factor productivity and rate of return of public sector units do not generally take into consideration the undervaluation of the assets and the underpricing of the products that deflate the estimates of the ratios. It is on the basis of the comparison of these ratios with the private enterprises often policy makers come to a judgement against the public enterprises.

In addition to the economic parameters, there are several ethical issues that are involved in the evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of public sector units. It is possible for a private sector unit to deceit and cheat the consumer through wrong information and dubious publicity. But that is not possible for public sector as a government enterprise, except some individuals who (as functionaries in their private capacity) might resort to such unethical activities. It is a known fact that how the R&D and sensitive information are smuggled into the private sector through swapping of personnel with the offer of plum posts in private sector. The estimates of profitability of a unit need to consider these issues while considering the costs and benefits of public sector units which are by design generally neglected. In the appendix, we have provided a brief note on the turnaround achieved by Visakhapatnam Steel Plant—a public sector unit. It was about to be closed by referring it to BIFR in 1990s, but it has achieved a turn around and is now considered as a 'miniratna' plant.

Table 3

Profitability of Central Public Sector Undertakings

(Rs. in crore)

	1970–71	*1980–81*	*1990–91*	*1995–96*	*1999–00*	*2005–06*
No. of units	87	168	236	241	232	225
Paid-up capital	1,820	8,730	43,240	65,300	82,400	—
Net worth	2,200	11,550	75,730	90,000	161,100	412,737
Capital employed	3,650	18,230	102,080	162,500	303,400	581,250
Gross profit	150	1,420	11,100	22,600	42,400	141,951
Pre-tax profits	20	40	3,500	9,800	22,300	84,250
Profits after Tax	—	180	2,270	7,200	14,600	70,288
%Gross profit to capital employed	4.0	7.8	10.9	14	14	18.3
% Pre-tax profit to capital employed	0.6	0.2	3.4	6	7	14.5
% PAT to net worth	–0.1	–1.6	3.0	8	9	17.0

Source: Economic Survey, Government of India for various years.

Note: Computer software exports were Rs. 103,200 crore in 2005–06 while small enterprises exports were Rs. 124,417 crore in 2004–05. The aggregate reserves and surplus of CPSE were Rs. 359,077 crore in 2005–06. Economic Survey 2006–07, p. 137.

It is pointed out in some studies that the investments in the public sector and the concessions granted to them were made possible as majority of the so-called deprived sections of society, like SCs, STs and OBCs, have foregone their legitimate share in development by remaining ignorant and underdeveloped so as to enable the state to invest in public sector. These deprived sections need to be rewarded for this. The Eleventh Plan preambled on inclusive growth, recognizing the debt of the state to these groups. There is an increasing realization now in some of the Latin American countries that the hasty retreat of foreign capital is

creating a risk of adjustment. We hope, the experience of these countries will hold a lesson to our policy makers on privatization.

Revitalization of Public Sector

The euphoria and excitement created by the neo-liberals in the 1980s and 1990s seem to be gradually fading away as one after the other promises made in favour of privatization disappeared at the beginning of the 21st century.[29] It is increasingly found in some of the African and Central Asian economies that democracy is in peril with the advent of corporate capitalism mostly imported from Anglo-Saxon countries. Every country is now concentrating strengthening its own capabilities and identity to improve the bargaining power in the international market. Some of the early birds of privatization seem to have realized the anti-democratic and inequality-oriented policies that ultimately cut into the very basis of the existence of their governments. India, being one of the leading stars of anti-colonial struggles in the past, is now conscious of its foundations on which the economy, society and polity were built. It is in this context the ideological articulations of Jawahar Lal Nehru and Ambedkar for a strong public sector seem to be relevant today. It is heartening to find that Prime Minster Dr. Manmohan Singh, in his address to the Conference of Chief Executives of Public Enterprises on March 8, 2007, reiterated as follows: "The revitalization of our public sector is an integral part of our strategy of promoting 'inclusive growth'. We regard the public sector truly as an engine of growth, a source of employment generation and as an important source of R&D in our industrial sector. Our government's policy has been to remove all irritants coming in the way of the healthy functioning of our public enterprises. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) outlines our commitment in this regard in unambiguous terms".[30] This assurance given by the Prime Minister is a testimony of our resolve to consider the public sector as a part of

our ethos and culture. Despite of its weaknesses, which the government has resolved to attend to, the public sector remains to be the life blood of our development. It remains to be the hope and not a despair of millions of our poor and disadvantaged groups. Therefore, it is the sacred duty of every Indian who affirms by Ambedkar, Nehru and all our founding fathers, who have expressed faith in public sector, to come out openly to protect it as we protect our sovereignty, independence and stability as a nation.

Turnaround of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

The Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) was set up in Visakhapatnam as a result of protracted struggle by Andhra people. However, it was in trouble due to the losses incurred during 1990s. The government was compelled to take up the first capital restructuring of the company in July 1993. This helped the company in avoiding reference to the BIFR and to raise funds for working capital. A second restructuring was undertaken in May 1998, converting government loans into redeemable preference capital. This too helped in avoiding reference to BIFR. However, the company could not be brought out of its financial problems. In compliance to the direction of cabinet for a comprehensive revival package for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. RINL (VSP), the proposal was prepared based on the recommendation of M/s A.T. Kearney, the consultants. However, the Ministry of Finance did not find the proposal viable and was against any further investment in the plant. In the meantime, the Disinvestments Commission recommended writing off of the entire accumulated losses of the company as on 31 March 1999 along with disinvestments of not less than 51 per cent of its remaining equity to a strategic buyer. However, no final decision has yet been taken on these recommendations of the Disinvestments Commission.

The Ministry of Steel initially prepared a comprehensive proposal, based on the recommendations of the Disinvestments Commission. However, with the formation of Department of Disinvestments, the latter has taken up the preparation and processing of the comprehensive proposal, based on the recommendations of the Disinvestments Commission, for obtaining the approval of the government. In the meantime, under the chairmanship of Union Finance Minister a meeting was held on 19th May, 2000 to take a final decision on the revival/restructuring of RINL (VSP). The Steel Minister, Disinvestments Minister and the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh attended this meeting. It was also decided to hold a subsequent meeting within four weeks. However, this meeting could not be held, as no date and time convenient to all the participants could be finalized.

The revival/disinvestments proposal was internally reviewed in the Ministry of Steel in February 2002, keeping in view the vastly improved performance of RINL and the difficulties being faced in reaching a consensus on the revival/disinvestment proposal framed by Department of Disinvestments. During this review meeting, it was noted that the company had been earning cash profit since 2001–02 and was expected to earn a net profit during the year 2002–03. It had also achieved/exceeded rated capacities against a number of parameters. Thus, the review noted that the company was well on the way to achieving a turnaround. It was, therefore, decided that the company should concentrate on a short-term turnaround strategy for growth and revival, which consists of the following:

1. Negotiating with LIC/UTI for full/partial conversion of loans into equity.
2. Negotiating with LIC/UTI for reduction of interest rates.
3. GoI guarantee for working capital loan for one year at a time.

The company, keeping in view the short-term turnaround strategy, undertook several initiatives to improve the performance in all the areas of its operation. The major initiatives are as follows:

- Employee commitment-building initiatives such as continuous interaction with the employees and unions, pro-active HR management, effective functioning of participating forums, open-house session with employees, etc.
- Emphasis on improving plant health by giving importance to planned maintenance and capital repairs, strict adherence to operating and maintenance practices, etc., and also following ISO 9001 certification standards.
- Strategic marketing by developing niche market for new products, development of new products and sections, drive to increase project sales, widening customer base and improved customer service, etc.
- Cost reduction drive, including recycling of metallurgical wastes and intensifying operational efficiency.
- Reduction of interest burden through negotiation with UTI and LIC, waiver of penal interest, prepayment of scheduled principal amounts through internal generation/swapping, availing lower interest products like commercial paper, FCNR (B) DL against working capital, etc.
- Getting waiver of GoI guarantee from consortium of bankers for sanction of working capital limits from the year 2004–05.

The above concerted efforts resulted in improved performance of the company from the year 2001 onwards. In the year 2002–03, the company achieved a turnaround by making a net profit of Rs. 520.69 crore for the first time in any financial year. The company has achieved a net profit of Rs. 1,547.19 crore during the year 2003–04 and Rs. 2,008.09 crore during the year 2004–05. It is expected that the it would wipe out all its past

losses completely during 2005–06. It also became debt-free by repaying all long-term debts in the year 2003–04. It has drawn up its corporate plan for expansion of its capacity to 10 million tonnes of liquid steel in phases.

The Government of India accorded its approval on 28th October, 2005, for expansion of the capacity of the company from the existing level of 3 million tonnes per annum of liquid steel capacity to 6.3 million tonnes per annum at an estimated cost of Rs. 8,692 crore (base June 2005 prices) with a time schedule of completing it in 36 months for Stage I, in 45 months for Special Bar Mill and in 48 months for Light Structural Mill.

The entire cost of the project will be met by the company from its internal resources (1:1 ratio of debt: equity) and there will be no budgetary support from the government.

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Eleven

Democracy and Development in India: Ambedkar's Vision

Indian democracy is at crossroads today. It is because of the fact that the Constitution of India, which Babasaheb Ambedkar so assiduously framed to give paramount importance to the individual and the principle of one-man-one-vote in political life, became vague in economic and social life. He was also the first person to bring to light after the republic of India came into existence, the dichotomy between the principle of 'one-man-one-vote' and 'one-man-too-many-values' in social life. But Ambedkar was trying to bring out the historical roots of democracy in India by analysing "Buddha and his Dhamma" as the celestial principles of democracy were practised in the Buddhist sanghas in ancient India. The dalits, he said, have inherited it as part of Buddhism. These principles have been given up, Ambedkar argued, by the Indians in course of time due to the brutal force used by Brahminical tyranny and dictatorship of the 'Purohit'. It is argued by some scholars that the matriarchal family structure of a

dalit is built around discussion and consensus in decision-making due to the tradition of Buddhism. There is no doubt that with the emergence of a separate group of employees of dalits in the organized sector, some of the values of the mainstream society are adopted and women in the dalit family have started experiencing the same discrimination as is practised in the patriarchal society. But Ambedkar wanted that women should be liberated from this bondage. He had introduced the Hindu Code Bill, which he thought would make women equal partners in democratic development. The concept of development here is used in a broad sense that includes human development.

Dictatorship of the Purohit versus Dictatorship of the Proletariat

It is not out of place to bring in here what Ambedkar has argued in his: "Buddha and Karl Marx" to illustrate how the parliamentary democracy is superior to others. One must remember here that it was Ambedkar who for the first time in the long history of India argued for the restoration of democratic rights to dalits. None of the leaders in the Indian Independence Movement asked for democratic rights more so for the untouchables. Adult franchise was not given to every citizen in British India and the leaders were content with the representation given to them in parliament. It was Ambedkar who for the first time in 1919 appeared before the South Bourrough Committee and argued for the grant of right to vote for the dalits. According to him, the Congress leadership, which was fighting for the freedom of the people of India, was under the control of the Purohit, the Brahmin and, therefore, they never bothered about the dalits. Ambedkar has exposed the Congress leadership very critically in his book *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables*. In this book, published in 1945, he drew the attention of the British and the dalits that both Congress and Gandhiji were under the control of the Hindu social

order or under the tyranny of the Purohit. In Chapter 8 of the book, Ambedkar was arguing for a separate identity for the dalits as a recognized group and thought that it alone can represent their own problems through their own platforms. The major objective in arguing for separate status and identity for dalits was made clear later in his political strategies which ended as a Poona Pact. Here, Gandhiji was dictated by the ideology of the Purohit, the supremacy of 'chaturvarna', and Ambedkar was guided by the long-run interests of the social proletariat. Therefore, he was arguing for a universal adult franchise which was at that time confined to those who have education and property. He said that the adult franchise is the inherent right of every individual in the state and it could not be considered on the merits of property and education. He said that "if I understand the franchise, I understand it to be the right to regulate terms of what one might call associated life in society.... Now, if that is the suffrage, surely you cannot give the higher classes the power to regulate the terms of associated life and leave the lower classes at their mercy". Here, Ambedkar was not arguing only on behalf of the dalits but on behalf of the majority of the poor, the proletariat. It was found that in the manifestos of the independent Labour Party and in Scheduled Caste Federation, he was emphasizing on the democratic rights of the dalits, particularly the economic rights.

Supremacy of Parliamentary Democracy

Among the statesmen of his genre, Ambedkar stands supreme in the entire world in upholding the supremacy of parliamentary democracy. He was an ardent defendant of democracy based on Indian traditions and history. He was explaining to the world that the ideals of democracy were inherent in Buddhist way of life and therefore much ancient than the West. He can even be considered as superior to Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of western democracy, who had to accommodate to a large extent

property with democracy. But Ambedkar speaking mainly from the Buddhist traditions argued for the liberty, equality and fraternity with limited access to property. However he was arguing for the co-existence of the three principles. He was saying that it "cannot be too much emphasized that in producing equality, society cannot afford to sacrifice fraternity or liberty. Equality will be of no value without fraternity or liberty. It seems that the three can co-exist only if one follows the way of Buddha" (Vol. 3, p. 462). This does not mean that Ambedkar was blind to modern development in democratic institutions. Actually he was arguing for the inseparable nature of personality and equality. He has reviewed the Hindu Dharma Sutras and social practices to find whether the Hindu has a personality or that personality is given to a dalit. He came to the conclusion that a dalit in Hindu society was considered as sub-human, leave alone his personality. Therefore, Ambedkar was struggling from the very beginning of his movement for the restoration of a personality and identity for the untouchables and also for the majority of the victims of Hinduism. That is why, he was in favour of freeing the motherland from the clutches of the British. But, the plank on which he was fighting for the independence of the country was different from all others. He was fighting to provide a personality and human dignity to dalits and other individuals. It is here that he was misunderstood and dubbed by the reactionary forces as pro-British. In fact, Ambedkar has provided theoretical basis for the sustenance of democracy in India based on individual liberty and personality. He said that, "the individual is an end in himself and the aim and object of society is the growth of the individual and the development of his personality. Society is not above the individual, and if the individual has to subordinate himself to society, it is because such subordination is for his betterment and only to the extent necessary". That is why, Ambedkar defended the Indian Constitution and the basic framework based on the individual, in his Constituent Assembly speech on 4th November, 1948. When he was attacked by several members for not making the ancient Indian polity as the basis of the Constitution, he

answered by saying that the village republics in which the members take pride did not consider the individual as a personality and his liberty. He said that "what is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the Draft-Constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit". He was giving importance to the individual and his liberty so much on the ground that it will make the parliamentary democracy strong in future. He was making a distinction between civil and political liberties as a part of the inalienable rights of the individual. Political liberty, according to him, consists of the right of the individual to share in the framing of laws, not in making and unmaking governments. Governments are institutions for securing men certain undeniable rights such as life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. This is the essence of Ambedkar's parliamentary democracy. This is under great stress because caste system has not given way to the individual to develop his personality and exercise his liberty. This is further accentuated by the recent developments in the new economic policy. We have elaborated how the caste system is strengthening the cleavages that promote multi-caste corporations in the 21st century India, defeating the very principles of democracy and capitalism elsewhere (see Chalam, 2007).

Post-Liberal Democracy and Relevance of Ambedkar

Ambedkar was never satisfied with the political democracy. Political democracy, he considered, was a means to advance the interests of the dalits in particular and the majority of the oppressed in general. That is why, he argued for the Soviet model of state-socialism without force. While evaluating the means through which the end of equality is achieved either through Buddhism or Marxism, Ambedkar argued in favour of non-violence. He has given the example of Ashoka who used

violence to establish his supremacy in Kalinga war, but later renounced it altogether. Therefore, equality can be achieved through either means but once it is achieved one need to renounce violence for the sustainability of equality, fraternity and liberty. This has been proved true after the downfall of the Soviet Union. The individual and his liberties should have been allowed to continue once the country achieved liberation without subjecting the individual liberty to party bureaucracy. Ambedkar was one of the very few statesmen of the world who foresaw the limits of political democracy. He was of the view that political democracy must ultimately trickle down to economic and social democracy in countries like India, otherwise it has no purpose and future. Therefore, in order to establish political democracy in India, he was arguing for liberal education and a strong public sector (see previous chapter) to build the underdeveloped Indian economy that could provide opportunities to everyone, particularly the disadvantaged dalits. The kind of development which Ambedkar visualized was different from what has happened in the recent past. He wanted a development where the individual as an autonomous actor devoid of bondages like caste would exercise his democratic right. His vision of democratic development was not an utopian idea. It has now entered in the development literature as a new paradigm. The noble laureate, Amartya Sen elaborated it in his book *Development as Freedom*, "it is democracy that sustains development and both of them should go together". However, the dichotomy between an individual as an autonomous actor and the individual as a member of a caste vis-à-vis development as not yet resolved through the constitutional means?

The Cultivation of Democratic Culture

Ambedkar grew up in a tradition of democracy both as a student and statesman. The dalits of India must learn from the experiences of Babasaheb and also from other countries. After the

cold war era, liberal capitalism has emerged as the order of the day. It has proved that it abolished slavery and servitude in the West. It is with this slogan, it has entered India. But one must be very careful in evaluating its achievements and weaknesses. The dalits must be very careful about its failure to inaugurate freedom and equality. The kind of parliamentary democracy, which was set in countries like India during the post-liberal democratic era, is based on the slogan of democratic empowerment, but raises the personal bondage of the individual due to economic reasons. The extension of democracy is not the extension of state power to reduce inequality and to bring equality of opportunity which Babasaheb enshrined in his model constitution 'States and Minorities' in 1947 for the successful sojourn of parliamentary democracy in India. The dalits must be vigilant against the abolition of institutions (that were created and inherited by the dalits through their struggles) by modern private corporations. These corporations are the inventions of the post-liberal democracy that combine individual liberty with private property that go against the interests of the dalits. There are several instances where the democratic aspirations of groups within the dalit castes are discouraged. This will create opportunities for the enemies of democracy in general and dalits in particular to use them as ploys to weaken the spirit of democracy. In order to defeat this treachery, the dalits must get united and nurture the culture of democracy among themselves by respecting each other's status and dignity. It is through this unity and the traditions of Ambedkar that they can fight for the dignity, personality and share in the national endeavour. This is possible through strengthening of their roots in democratic institutions and in opposing those tendencies, which are against the democratic norms. This is the message that Ambedkar has given to Indians. Let us awake and work unitedly to achieve the long-cherished goal of Babasaheb Ambedkar, that is, development through parliamentary democracy.

Annexure-I

Memorial Addressed to the Education Commission by Jyoti Rao Phooley*

A Statement for the Information of the Education Commission

My experience in educational matters is principally confined to Poona and the surrounding villages. About 25 years ago, the missionaries had established a female school at Poona but no indigenous school for girls existed at the time. I, therefore, was induced, about the year 1854, to establish such a school, and in which I and my wife worked together for many years. After some time I placed this school under the management of a committee of educated natives. Under their auspices two more schools were opened in different parts of the town. A year after the institution of the female schools, I also established an indigenous mixed

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**Source:* Education Commission, Bombay Vol. II, Calcutta, 1884, pp. 140–145.

school for the lower classes, especially for the Mahars and Mangs. Two more schools for these classes were subsequently added. Sir Erskine Perry, the president of the late Educational Board and Mr. Lumsdain, the then Secretary to Government, visited the female schools and were much pleased with the movement set on foot, and presented me with a pair of shawls. I continued to work in them for nearly 9 to 10 years, but owing to circumstances, which it is needless here to detail, I seceded from the work. These female schools still exist, having been made over by the committee to the educational department under the management of Mrs. Mitchell. A school for the lower classes, Mahars and Mangs, also exists at the present day, but not in a satisfactory condition. I have also been a teacher for some years in a mission female boarding school. My principal experience was gained in connection with these schools. I devoted some attention also to the primary education available in this Presidency and have had some opportunities of forming an opinion as to the system and personnel employed in the lower schools of the educational department. I wrote some years ago a Marathi pamphlet exposing the religious practices of the Brahmins and incidently among other matters adverted therein to the present system of education, which by providing ample funds for higher education tended to educate Brahmins and the higher classes only, and to leave the masses wallowing in ignorance and poverty. I summarized the views expressed in the book in an English preface attached thereto, portions of which I reproduce here so far as they relate to the present enquiry:

"Perhaps a part of the blame in bringing matters to this crisis may be justly laid to the credit of the government. Whatever may have been their motives in providing ample funds and greater facilities for higher education, and neglecting that of the masses, it will be acknowledged by all that in justice to the latter, this is not as it should be. It is an admitted fact that the greater portion of the revenues of the Indian Empire are derived from the Ryot's

labour—form the sweat of his brow. The higher and richer classes contribute little or nothing to the state exchequer. A well-informed English writer states that our income is derived, not from surplus profits, but from capital; not from luxuries, but from the poorest necessaries. It is the product of sin and tears."

"That government should expend profusely a large portion of revenue thus raised, on the education of the higher classes, for it is these only who take advantage of it, is anything but just or equitable. Their object in patronizing this virtual high class education appears to be to prepare scholars who, it is thought would in time vend learning without money and without price. If we can inspire, say they, the love of knowledge in the minds of the superior classes, the result will be a higher standard, of morals in the cases of the individuals, a large amount of affection for the British government, and unconquerable desire to spread among their own countrymen the intellectual blessings which they have received."

"Regarding these objects of government the writer above alluded to states that we have never heard of philosophy more benevolent and more utopian. It is proposed by men who witness the wondrous changes brought about in the Western world, purely by the agency of popular knowledge, to redress the defects of the two hundred millions of India, by giving superior education to the superior classes and to them only. We ask the friends of Indian universities to favour us with a single example of the truth of their theory from the instances which have already fallen within the scope of their experience. They have educated many children of wealthy men and have been the means of advancing very materially the worldly prospects of some of their pupils. But what contribution have these made to great work of regenerating their fellow men? How have they begun to act upon the masses? Have any of them formed classes at their own homes or elsewhere, for the instruction of their less fortunate or less wise countrymen? Or have they kept their knowledge to themselves, as

a personal gift, not to be soiled by contact with the ignorant vulgar? Have they in any way shown themselves anxious to advance the general interests and repay the philanthropy with patriotism? Upon what grounds is it asserted that the best way to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of the people is to raise the standard of instruction among the higher classes? A glorious arguments this for aristocracy, were it only tenable. To show the growth of the national happiness, it would only be necessary to refer to the number of pupils at the colleges and the lists of academic degrees. Each wrangler would be accounted a national benefactor; and the existence of Deans and Proctors would be associated, like the game laws and the ten-pound franchise, with the best interests of the constitution."

"One of the most glaring tendencies of government system of high class education has been the virtual monopoly of all the higher offices under them by Brahmins. If the welfare of the Ryot is at heart, if it is the duty of government to check a host of abuses, it behoves them to narrow this monopoly day by day so as to allow a sprinkling of the other castes to get into the public services. Perhaps some might be inclined to say that it is not feasible in the present state of education. Our only reply is that if government look a little less after higher education which is able to take care of no difficulty in training up a body of men every way qualified and perhaps far better in morals and manners."

"My object in writing the present volume is not only to tell my Shudra brethren how they have been duped by the Brahmins, but also to open the eyes of government to that pernicious system of high class education, which has hitherto been so persistently followed, and which statesmen like Sir George Campbeli the present Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, with broad universal sympathies, are finding to be highly mischievous and pernicious to the interests of government. I sincerely hope that government will here long see the error of their ways, trust less to writers or men who look through high class spectacles, and take the glory

into their own hands of emancipating my Shudra brethren from the trammels of bondage which the Brahmins have woven around them like the coils of a serpent. It is no less the duty of each of my Shudra brethren as have received any education, to place before government the true state of their fellow men and endeavour to the best of their power to emancipate themselves from Brahmin thralldom. Let there be schools for the Shudras in every village; but away with all Brahmin school-masters. The Shudras are the life and sinews of the country, and it is to them alone, and not to the Brahmins, that government must ever look to tide over their difficulties, financial as well as political. If the hearts and minds of the Shudras are made happy and contended, the British government need have no fear for their loyalty in the future."

Primary Education

There is little doubt that primary education among the masses in this Presidency has been very much neglected. Although the number of primary schools now in existence is greater than those existing a few years ago, yet they are not commensurate to the requirements of the community. Government collect a special cess for educational purposes, and it is to be regretted that this fund is not spent for the purposes for which it is collected. Nearly nine-tenths of the villages in this Presidency, or nearly 10 lakhs of children, it is said, are without any provision, whatever, for primary instruction. A good deal of their poverty, their want of self-reliance, their entire dependence upon the learned and intelligent classes, is attributable to this deplorable state of education among the peasantry.

Even in towns the Brahmins, the Purbhoos, the hereditary classes, who generally live by the occupation of pen, and the trading classes seek primary instruction. The cultivating and the other classes, as a rule, do not generally avail themselves of the same. A few of the latter class are found in primary and secondary

schools, but owing to their poverty and other causes they do not continue long at school. As there are no special inducements for these to continue at school, they naturally leave off as soon as they find any menial hold aloof, owing to extreme poverty, and also because they require their children to tend cattle and look after their fields. Besides an increase in the number of schools, special inducements in the shape of scholarships and half-yearly or annual prizes, to encourage them to send their children to school and thus create in them a taste for learning, is most essential. I think primary education of the masses should be made compulsory up to a certain age, say at least 12 years. Muhammadans also hold aloof from these schools, as they somehow evince no liking for Marathi or English. There are a few Muhammadan primary schools where their own language is taught. The Mahars, Mangs, and other lower classes are practically excluded from all schools owing to caste prejudices, as they are not allowed to sit by the children of higher castes. Consequently special schools for these have been opened by government. But these exist only in large town. In the whole of Poona and for a population exceeding over 5,000 people, there is only one school, and in which the attendance is under 30 boys. This state of matters is not at all creditable to the educational authorities. Under the promise of the Queen's Proclamation I beg to urge that Mahars, Mangs and other lower classes, where their number is large enough, should have separate schools for them, as they are not allowed to attend the other schools owing to caste prejudices.

In the present state of education, payment by results is not at all suitable for the promotion of education amongst a poor and ignorant people, as no taste has yet been created among them for education. I do not think any teacher would undertake to open schools on his own account among these people, as he would not be able to make a living by it. Government schools and special

inducements, as noted above, are essential until such a taste is created among them.

With regard to the few government primary schools that exist in the Presidency, I beg to observe that the primary education imparted in them is not at all placed on a satisfactory or sound basis. The system is imperfect in so far as it does not prove practical and useful in the future career of the pupils. The system is capable of being developed up to the requirement of the community, if improvements that will result in its future usefulness be effected in it. Both the teaching machinery employed and the course in instruction now followed, require a thorough remodeling.

(a) The teachers now employed in the primary schools are almost all Brahmins; a few of them are from the normal training college, the rest being all untrained men. Their salaries are very low, seldom exceeding Rs. 10, and their attainments also very meagre. But as a rule they are all unpractical men, and the boys who learn under them generally imbibe inactive habits and try to obtain service, to the avoidance of their hereditary or other hardy or independent professions. I think teachers for primary schools should be trained, as far as possible, out of the cultivating classes, who will be able to mix freely with them and understand their wants and wishes much better than a Brahmin teacher, who generally holds himself aloof under religious prejudices. These would, moreover, exercise a more beneficial influence over the masses than teachers of other classes, and who will not feel ashamed to hold the handle of a plough or the carpenter's adze when required, and who will be able to mix themselves readily with the lower orders of society. The course of training for them ought to include, besides the ordinary subjects, an elementary knowledge of agriculture and sanitation. The untrained teachers should, except when thoroughly efficient, be replaced by efficient

trained teachers. To secure a better class of teachers and to improve their position, better salaries should be given. Their salaries should not be less than Rs. 12 and in larger villages should be at least Rs. 15 or 20. Associating them in the village polity as auditors of village accounts or registrars of deeds, or village postmasters or stamps vendors, would improve their status, and thus exert a beneficial influence over the people among whom they live. The schoolmasters of village schools who pass a large number of boys should also get some special allowance other than their pay, as an encouragement to them.

(b) The course of instruction should consist of reading, writing Modi, and Balbodh and accounts, and a rudimentary knowledge of general history, general geography, and grammar, also an elementary knowledge of agriculture and a few lessons on moral duties and sanitation. The studies in the village schools might be fewer than those in larger villages and towns, but not the less practical. In connection with lessons in agriculture, a small model farm, where practical instruction to the pupils can be given, would be productive of the greatest good to the country. The textbook in use, both in the primary and Anglovernacular schools, require revision and recasting as much as they are not practical or progressive in their scope. Lessons on technical education and morality, sanitation and agriculture, and some useful arts, should be interspersed among them in progressive series. The fees in the primary schools should be as 1 to 2 from the children of cesspayers and non-cesspayers.

(c) The supervising agency over these primary schools is also very defective and insufficient. The Deputy Inspector's visit once a year can hardly be of any appreciable benefit. All these schools ought at least to be inspected quarterly if not oftener. I would also suggest the advisability of visiting these schools at other times and without any intimation being

given. No reliance can be placed on the district or village officers owing to the multifarious duties devolving on them, as they seldom find time to visit them and when they do, their examination is necessarily very superficial and imperfect. European inspector's supervision is also occasionally very desirable, as it will tend to exercise a very efficient control over the teachers generally.

(d) The number of primary schools should be increased:

(i) By utilizing such of the indigenous schools as shall be or are conducted by trained and certificated teachers, by giving them liberal grants-in-aid.

(ii) By making over one half of the local cess fund for primary education alone.

(iii) By compelling, under a statutory enactment, municipalities to maintain all the primary schools within their respective limits.

(iv) By an adequate grant from the provisional or imperial funds. Prizes and scholarships to pupils, and capitation or other allowance to the teachers, as an encouragement, will tend to render these schools more efficient.

The municipalities in large towns should be asked to contribute whole share of the expenses incurred on primary schools within the municipal areas. But in no case ought the management of the same to be entirely made over to them. They should be under the supervision of the educational department.

The municipalities should also give grants-in-aid to such secondary and private English schools as shall be conducted according to the rules of the educational department, where their funds permit, such grants-in-aid being regulated by the number of boys passed every year. These contributions from municipal funds may be made compulsory by statutory enactment.

The administration of the funds for primary education should ordinarily be in the hands of the Director of Public Instruction.

But if educated and intelligent men are appointed on the local or district committees, these funds may be safely entrusted to them, under the guidance of the Collector, or the Director of Public Instruction. At present, the local boards consist of ignorant and uneducated men, such as Patels, Inamdars, Surdars, & C. who would not be capable of exercising any intelligent control over the funds.

Indigenous Schools

Indigenous schools exist a good deal in cities, towns and some large villages, especially where there is a Brahmin population. From the latest reports of Public Instruction in this Presidency, it is found that there are 1,049 indigenous schools with about 27,694 pupils in them. They are conducted on the old village system. The boys are generally taught the multiplication table by heart, a little Modi writing and reading, and to recite a few religious pieces. The teachers, as a rule, are not capable of effecting any improvements, as they are not initiated in the art of teaching. The teachers generally come from the dregs of Brahminical society. Their qualifications hardly go beyond reading and writing Marathi very indifferently, and casting accounts up to the rule of three or so. They set up as teachers as the last resource of getting a livelihood. Their failure or unfitness in other callings of the life obliges them to open schools. No arrangements exist in the country to train up teachers for indigenous schools. The indigenous schools could not be turned to any good account, unless the present teachers are replaced by men from the vernaculars. The present teachers will willingly accept state aid but money thus spent will be thrown away. I do not know any instance in which a grant-in-aid is paid to such a school. If it is

being paid anywhere, it must be in very rare cases. In my opinion no grants-in-aid should be paid to such schools unless the master is a certificated one. But if certificated or competent teachers be found, grants-in-aid should be given and will be productive of great good.

Higher Education

The cry over the whole country has been for sometime past that government have amply provided for higher education, whereas that of the masses has been neglected. To some extent this cry is justified, although the classes directly benefited by the higher education may not readily admit it. But for all this no well-wisher of his country would desire that government should, at the present time, withdraw its aid from higher education. All that they would wish is, that as one class of the body politic has been neglected, its advancement should form as anxious a concern as that of the other. Education in India is still in its infancy. Any withdrawal of state aid from higher education cannot but be injurious to the spread of education generally.

A taste for education among the higher and wealthy classes, such as the Brahmins and Purbhoos, especially those classes who live by the pen, has been created, and a gradual withdrawal of state aid may be possible so far as these classes are concerned; but in the middle and lower classes, among whom higher education has made no perceptible progress, such a withdrawal would be a great hardship. In the event of such withdrawal, boys will be obliged to have recourse to inefficient and sectarian schools, much against their wish, and the cause of education cannot but suffer. Nor could any part of such education be entrusted to private agency. For a long time to come the entire educational machinery, both ministerial and executive, must be in the hands of government. Both the higher and primary education require all

the fostering care and attention which government can bestow on it.

The withdrawal of government from schools or colleges would not only tend to check the spread of education, but would seriously endanger that spirit of neutrality which has all along been the aim of government to foster, owing to the different nationalities and religious creeds prevalent in India. This withdrawal may, to a certain extent, create a spirit of self-reliance for local purposes in the higher and wealthy classes, but the cause of education would be so far injured that the spirit of self-reliance would take years to remedy that evil. Educated men of ability, who do not succeed in getting into public service, may be induced to open schools for higher education on being assured of liberal grants-in-aid. But no one would be ready to do so on his own account as a means of gaining a livelihood, and it is doubtful whether such private efforts could be permanent or stable, nor would they succeed half so well in their results. Private schools, such as those of Mr. Vishnu Shastree Chiploonkar and Mr. Bhavey, exist in Poona, and with adequate grants-in-aid may be rendered very efficient, but they can never supersede the necessity of the high school.

The missionary schools, although some of them are very efficiently conducted, do not succeed half so well in their results, nor do they attract half the number of students which the high school attract. The superiority of government schools is mainly owing to the richly paid staff of teachers and professors which is not possible for a private schools to maintain.

The character of instruction given in the government higher schools, is not at all practical, or such as is required for the necessities of ordinary life. It is only good to turn out so many clerks and schoolmasters. The matriculation examination unduly engrosses the attention of the teachers and pupils, and the course of studies prescribed has no practical element in it, so as to fit the

pupil for his future career in independent life. Although the number of students presenting for the entrance examination is not at all large when the diffusion of knowledge in the country is taken into consideration, it looks large when the requirements of government service are concerned. Were the education universal and within easy reach of all, the number would have been larger still, and it should be so, and I hope it will be so hereafter. The higher education should be so arranged as to be within easy reach of all, and the books on the subjects for the matriculation examination should be published in the Government Gazette, as is done in Madras and Bengal. Such a course will encourage private studies and secure larger diffusion of knowledge in the country. It is a boon to the people that the Bombay University recognizes private studies in the case of those presenting for the entrance examination. I hope, the university authorities will be pleased to extend the same boon to higher examinations. If private studies be recognized by the university, much good will be effected to the country at large, and a good deal of the drain on the public purse on account of higher education will be lessened.

The system of government scholarships, at present followed in the government schools, is also defective, as much as it give undue encouragement to those classes only, who have already acquired a taste for education to the detriment of the other classes. The system might be so arranged that some of these scholarships should be awarded to such classes amongst whom education has made no progress.

The system of awarding them by competition, although abstractedly equitable, does not tend to the spread of education among other classes.

With regard to the question as to educated natives finding remunerative employments, it will be remembered that the educated natives who mostly belong to the Brahminical and other higher classes are mostly fond of service. But as the public service

can afford no field for all the educated natives who come out from schools and colleges, and moreover the course of training they receive being not of a technical or practical nature, they find great difficulty in betaking themselves to other manual or remunerative employments. Hence the cry that the market is overstocked with educated natives who do not find any remunerative employment. It may, to a certain extent, be true that some of the professions are overstocked, but this does not show that there is no other remunerative employment to which they can betake themselves. The present number of educated men is very small in relation to the country at large, and we trust that the day may not be far distant when we shall have the present number multiplied a hundred-fold and all betaking themselves to useful and remunerative occupations and not be looking after service.

In conclusion, I beg to request the Education Commission to be kind enough to sanction measures for the spread of female primary education on a more liberal scale.

Poona
19th October, 1882

JYOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHOOLEY
Merchant and Cultivator and
Municipal Commissioner,
Peth Joona Ganja

Annexure-II

Educational and Other Grievances Presented by B.R. Ambedkar as Member of Executive of Governor General's Council, 1942-46

EDUCATIONAL GRIEVANCES

V. Want of Assistance for Advanced Education

33. Looking at the growth of Advanced Education among the Scheduled Caste boys, the following conclusions are deducible:

(1) That education in Arts and Law is progressing satisfactorily.

(2) That education in Science and Engineering has made no progress.

(3) That Advanced Education in foreign Universities is a very far cry.

34. This sad situation needs to be properly appreciated. As was said in discussing the question of the entry of the Scheduled Castes in the public services, the welfare of the Scheduled Castes depends entirely upon a sympathetic public service and that the public service if it is to be sympathetic must be representative of the different elements in the national life of the country, and particularly of the Scheduled Castes. To this it must be added that the representation of the Scheduled Castes if it is confined to ministerial posts will be of no consequence no matter how numerous are the posts they are permitted to occupy. This may be good from the standpoint of providing a career for educated young men. It cannot affect the condition of the Scheduled Castes. The status and condition of the Scheduled Castes will be improved only when the representatives of the Scheduled Castes come to occupy executive posts as distinguished from ministerial posts. Executive posts are strategic posts, posts from which a new direction can be given to the affairs of the State. The attainment of executive post, it is obvious requires a high degree of education. Such posts will not be open except to those who have acquired advanced education.

35. Education in Arts and Law cannot be of much value to the Scheduled Castes either to the graduates themselves or to the people. It has not been of very high value even to Hindus. What will help the Scheduled Castes is education of an advanced type in Science and Technology. But it is obvious that education in Science and Technology is beyond the means of the Scheduled Castes and this is why so many of them send their children to take up courses in Arts and Law. Without Government assistance, the field of Advanced Education in Science and Technology will never become open to the Scheduled Castes, and it is only just and proper that the Central Government should come forward to aid them in this connection.

36. This problem will be solved if the following proposals are accepted by the Government of India:

    (1) An annual grant of Rs. 2 lakhs for scholarships for Scheduled Caste students taking Science and

Technology courses tenable at the Universities or other Scientific and Technical Training Institutions in India.

(2) An annual grant of one lakh of rupees to be spent on scholarships for the education of Scheduled Caste students for Science and Technology in foreign Universities in England, the Dominions, in Europe and in America.

37. There is nothing to prevent the Government of India from undertaking this responsibility. Education, it is true, is not a Central subject for legislative purposes. Still, section 150(2) of the Government of India Act says that the Central Government may make grants for any purpose, notwithstanding that the purpose is not one with respect to which the Central Legislature may make laws. This power has been used by the Government of India to support Educational Institutions. Below is given a list of Educational Institutions outside the centrally Administered Areas, which receive grants-in-aid from the central revenues.

Educational Institutions	*Amount per annum*
I. Educational Institutions	
1. Indian Women's University, Bombay	Two non-recurring grants of Rs. 50,000 were made to this institution in 1937-38 and 1941-42.
2. Visva-Bharti Santiniketan	Rs. 25,000
3. Inter-University Board India	Rs. 1,000
4. Inter-Provincial Board for Anglo-Indian and European Education	Rs. 3,600
II. Scientific Societies	
1. Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Calcutta.	Rs. 18,000
2. Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta	Rs. 2,500
3. Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta	Rs. 37,000
4. National Institute of Science of India, Calcutta	Rs. 6,000
5. Vishvesharanand Vedic Research Institute, Simla	Rs. 2,500

6. Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore	Rs. 1,50,000
7. Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona	Rs. 4,000
8. Bose Research Institute, Calcutta	Rs. 45,000

III. Miscellaneous

1. Indian Olympic Association	Rs. 2,000
2. Girl Guides Association, India	Rs. 2,500
Total of annual recurring grants	Rs. 2,99,100

38. This does not include the annual subvention which the Government of India gives of Rs. 3 lakhs per annum to the Muslim University of Aligarh and of Rs. 3 lakhs per annum to the Hindu University of Benaras. The claim made on behalf of the Scheduled Castes for help in the matter of advanced education at home and abroad receives great support from the financial aid given by Central Government to these two Universities. The grant made to the Universities is really grant made to the Hindu and Muslim communities for supporting higher education. That being so, there is no reason why the Central Government should not undertake to make a similar grant of 3 lakhs of rupees annually to promote higher education among the Scheduled Castes. If the Government is interested in raising the status of the Scheduled Castes, which they have often proclaimed to be their duty, *it is high time that a similar provision was made for them in the education budget of the Central Government.* (emphasis added)

39. The scheme if it is given effect to will revolutionise the condition and status of the Scheduled Castes. The Scheduled Castes lay great store by it. They would even be prepared for the scheme being made a loan system rather than a system of grants. The Scheduled Caste boys who receive these scholarships shall be glad to take advantage of it even if they are required to refund the sums received by them when they are employed or they may be made to serve the Government for a term under a lower scale of salary. There can be no objection to Government accepting these proposals.

40. For the purpose of assisting Advanced Scientific and Technical Education among the Scheduled Caste students I am making two other proposals. One is to make: (3) *Provision for Scheduled Caste students in the School of Mines.*

The Government of India has under its control the Indian School of Mines, which is located at Dhanbad. The school provides high-grade instructions in Mine Engineering and in Geology. The training given in the Indian School of Mines is calculated to train men who can serve in the coal mining industry and other mineral industries in India. The number of students that are at present taking instructions in the Indian School of Mines are about 97. The school is open to students from all parts of India. From enquiries made it is established that out of the 97 students there is not a single one from the Scheduled Castes. It is very necessary that some special measures should be taken by the Government of India to see that the students belonging to the Scheduled castes are in a position to take advantage of the Indian School of Mines. To achieve this object it will be necessary:

(a) To reserve a certain number of seats for the Scheduled Caste boys having the minimum standard of education required for admission.
(b) The grant of free-ships.
(c) The grant of scholarships.

It will not be too much to claim that one-tenth of the total number of admissions should be reserved for the Scheduled Castes. This is a matter, which falls within the scope of the Labour Department. But it is a question, which concerns also the Finance Department in as much as the free-ships, and scholarships would mean the loss of revenue to the State. But the loss on account of these measures will not be very great. The annual fee on an average, which a student has to incur in the School of Mines, be about 60 rupees a month which would mean a monthly expense of Rs. 60 per student.

41. The other proposal, which I wish to make, is to give:

(4) *Representation to the Scheduled Castes on the Central Advisory Board of Education.*

42. The constitution of the Board consists of:

(1) The Honourable Member in charge of the Department of Education, Health and Lands (Chairman);

(2) The Educational Commissioner with the Government of India;

(3) Ten nominees of the Government of India, of whom one at least shall be a woman;

(4) One member of the Council of State elected by the Council of State;

(5) Two members of the Legislative Assembly elected by the Legislative Assembly.

(6) Three members of the Inter-University Board, India, nominated by the Inter-University Board of India.

(7) A representative of each local Government, who shall be either the Minister in charge of Education (or his deputy) or the Director of Public Instruction (or his deputy) or such other person as the Provincial Government may nominate in this behalf.

43. The functions of the Board are:

(a) To advise on any educational question which may be referred to it by the Government of India or by local Government.

(b) To call for information and advice regarding educational developments of special interest and value to India; to examine this information and to circulate it with recommendations to the Government of India and to local Governments.

44. From the functions of the Board it is quite clear that the Broad can study the educational problem of the Scheduled Castes as that of special interest and frame recommendations and advice Central and Provincial Governments in that connection. Such a thing can be of immense importance in focusing the attention of the Governments and the Universities on the spread of higher education among the Scheduled Castes.

45. It is, however, necessary in the first place to get the Board interested in the educational problem of specie classes like the Scheduled Castes. This can be done only by giving representation to members of the Scheduled Castes on the Board. It is therefore, suggested that two representative of the Scheduled Castes should be nominated on the board.

VI. Want of Facilities for Technical Training (Technical Education)

46. From the point of raising the economic condition, technical education for the Scheduled Castes is more important than literary education. But technical education is also very costly and it is not possible for children of the Scheduled Castes to take technical education, and without technical education their economic condition will not be improved. Owing to the social system of the Hindus, the Scheduled Castes occupy economically a very low place in the Indian economy. In times of prosperity he is last to be employed, and in times of depression he is first to be discharged. This, of course, is a result of the social prejudices of the Hindus, which operate against him. But there is also the other difficulty, which stands in his way and that are he is generally an unskilled labourer with no technical knowledge.

47. It seems to me that the Government of India can do a great deal to improve his lot by enabling him to acquire technical skill which he does not now possess and this can be easily done by introducing a system of apprenticeship for the Scheduled Caste boys in undertakings run or controlled by the Government of India, in which the possibilities of giving such technical training do exist. I am referring only to two:

(1) *Apprenticeships in Government Printing Presses:* There are a number of Printing Presses which are maintained by the Government of India. There are so many skilled occupations, which are open to persons trained in a printing press—compositors, printers, binders etc.

There is no reason why the Government of India should not have a scheme whereby suitable boys from the Scheduled Castes should be taken as apprentices to learn the various occupations, which are related to the printing trade.

(2) *Apprenticeships in Railway Workshops:* The Railways in India, most of which are owned by the Government of India, also maintain workshops where fitters, carpenters and other technicians are employed, and I do not know whether the Railway Department have schemes of taking apprentices to be trained as technicians to be subsequently employed on the Railways. But even if such a scheme was not in existence it is necessary to have one for the benefit of the Scheduled Castes.

48. I therefore suggest the scheme of apprenticeship whereby annually a good number of boys from the Scheduled Castes should be given training in the printing press and the Railway Workshops. The cost of it cannot be very great.

VIII. Closed-door in Government Contracts

A good part of Government needs in Public Works is carried out not departmentally but by contracts. This is so in normal times. In war times the work done for Government by the contract system has expanded several hundred fold. I can speak only of the Central Public Works Department. The list of approved contractors maintained, by the Central Public Works Department is 1.171. Of these, I am told, there is only one contractor belonging to the Scheduled Castes. The rest of them are Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. It should be possible for Government to arrange things in such a manner as to make its contract system allow an open door to members of all communities to profit by it. There are many persons of the Scheduled Castes who could be trusted to carry out a Government contract. Already many members of the Scheduled Castes are working as employees of Hindus, Muslim or Sikh contractors. The result is that the Hindu,

Muslim or Sikh contractors are taking profit while the Scheduled Caste men are working on a mere wage.

There is not much difficulty in getting a certain number of men from the Scheduled Castes put on the list of approved contractors. But what is important is to enable them to get a contract. There are two rules in the matter of Government contracts:

1. That a contract is to be given generally to a contractor whose tender is the lowest;
2. That Government is not bound to accept the lowest tender.

It is, therefore, a matter of discretion, which is exercised by the Officer in charge whether a contract will go to a particular contractor or not. This discretion is not likely to be exercised in favour of a Scheduled Caste contractor. His tender may be the lowest but owing to communal prejudice he may not accept it and rely on the second rule "that he is not bound to accept the lowest". If his tender is higher than the lowest, he will not accept it although he is free to do so. He will rely on the first of the two rules. Either way he will have his justification for rejecting the tender of the Scheduled Caste contractors.

There is of course, no remedy against communal basis. The only thing that strikes me that we can do is to amend the rule by saying that a tender of a Scheduled Caste contractor, if it is not higher than the lowest by 5 per cent, shall be deemed to be the lowest. This, of course, involves financial loss and the Finance Department will have to agree to it. I cannot give any idea of the approximate cost of such a concession. I am sure it will not be heavy as to break the camel's back.

IV. Absence of Representation of the Federal Public Service Commission

There are four members who at present constitute the Federal Public Service Commission. Of these, two are Europeans, one is a Hindu and one is a Mohammedan. The Scheduled Castes have been left out in framing the composition of the Federal Public Service Commission. There is no ground why they should be

denied representation on the Federal Public Service Commission. There are three main sections of the people in India. Of these, the Schedules Castes form the third main section. The population of this section is measured in millions. Their interest in the service question is quite as important as those of the other two main sections of the populations. The danger to their interests is no less real than to the interests of the other two sections. And the necessity of warding off that danger is much greater than it is in the case of the other two. Judged by any test it is difficult to justify the refusal to give representation to the Scheduled Castes from the Federal Public Service Commission. The Federal Public Service Commission has definitely been given communal character. There can be only two conceivable reasons for doing this. In the first place it may be because it is desirable to have representatives of large sections of the people on the Commission. The second reason one can conceive of for giving communal composition to the Commission is to set-off the communal bias of one community by the communal bias of the other community. Whichever way one looks at it, the omission to give representation to the Scheduled Castes on the Federal Public Service Commission is sheer injustice. The Scheduled Castes cannot have any confidence in a Public Service Commission which is infected by the point of view of the Hindus and the Muslims who with all their quarrels can very easily unite to distribute the loaves and fishes among themselves and to keep out the Scheduled Castes from getting their due share. It is difficult to prove that the Commission has been unjust to the Scheduled Castes though the fact remains that not a single Scheduled Caste candidate has so far been certified by the Commission to be fit. For no Commission can be convicted of partiality. It is open to every Commission to take shelter under that most elusive term "unsuitable". That term far from giving an explanation is intended to cover a multitude of sins. Justice requires that the Scheduled Castes should get representation on the Federal Public Service Commission, which is their due.

(*Source:* Ambedkar.org.com)

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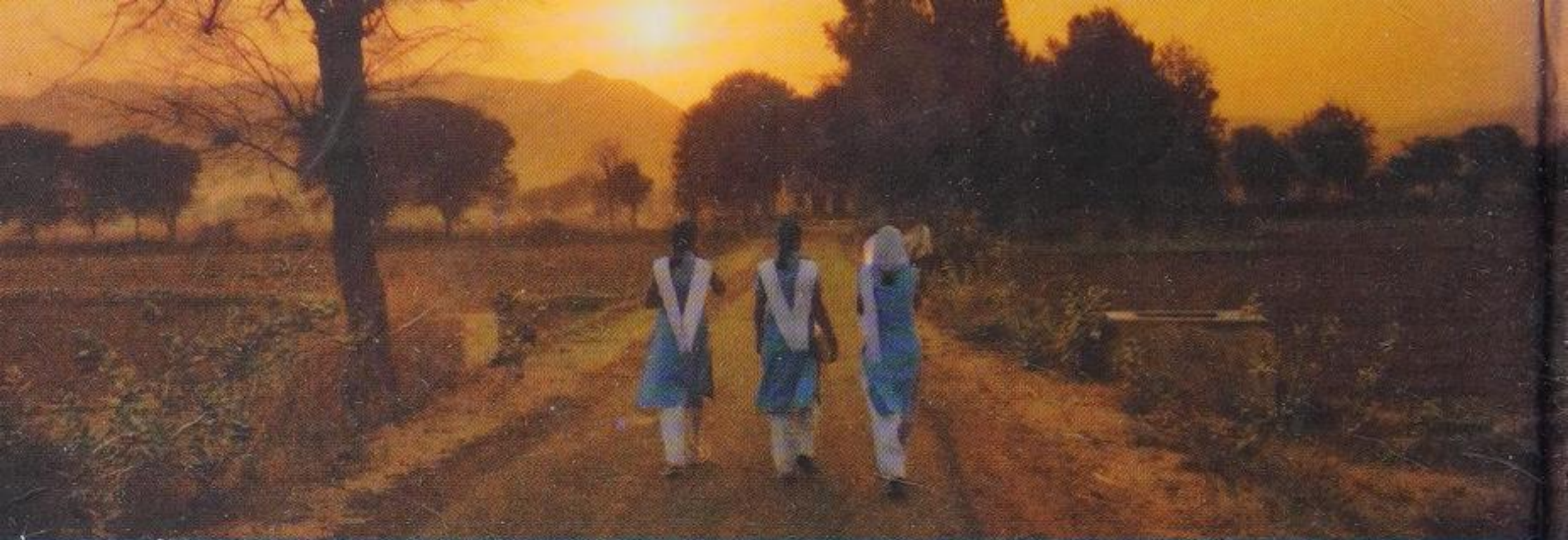

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